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# ENVISIONING SIBERIA: SIBERIAN REGIONALISM THROUGH EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION

by

ANTHONY W. JOHNSON

Under the Direction of Hugh D. Hudson, Jr., PhD

## ABSTRACT

As the Russian government enacted the Great Reforms of the 1850s and 1860s, Siberian students in St. Petersburg at the time came to the realization that urban, judicial, and land reforms had to take place in Siberia in order for the region to develop. Starting with meetings of the Siberian Circle in the capital, regionalists strove to elevate Siberia's socio-political position within the Russian Empire. Regionalists believed that the Russian government envisioned Siberia exclusively as a place of exile and hard labor, as a territory for natural resources, and as a region unworthy of any real development. The chief theorists of regionalism, Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin and Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, sought to reconceptualize the

relationship between European Russia and Siberia while publicizing regional needs. For regionalists, ending the system of Siberian exile, fostering the development of education, and pushing Siberia's political and economic development would make Siberia a vital and vibrant region of the empire and end Siberia's traditionally subservient status. Forces constantly pushed regionalism, as regionalists found their movement shaped, in turn, by the Russian state, Siberian realities, revolutionary forces, and civil war.

Regionalists struggled to come to terms with their desire to see Siberia included in the Russian Empire in meaningful ways even as the government treated the region as an economic, political, and cultural afterthought. While regionalists endeavored to construct viable alternatives for regional development, evolving reality did as much, if not more, to shape regionalism, pushing its adherents in new and surprising directions, sometimes against their will.

INDEX WORDS: Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, Siberian Regionalism, History of Siberia, History of Tomsk, Socio-Political Movements, *oblastnichestvo*.

ENVISIONING SIBERIA: SIBERIAN REGIONALISM  
THROUGH EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION

by

ANTHONY W. JOHNSON

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2016

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ENVISIONING SIBERIA: SIBERIAN REGIONALISM THROUGH EVOLUTION AND  
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by

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August 2016

## **DEDICATION**

This is for the members of my family. They tolerated everything involved in my writing this, doing so with grace and patience.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are so many people who have influenced my intellectual journey. Baretta Haynes believed that I could be a good historian when I was thirteen, and she did everything that she could to encourage me. Helen Holden recruited me for an AP European History course in high school and then proceeded to ply me with readings ranging from Plato to Machiavelli, convincing me that history courses should be cross-listed as World Domination 101. Circumstances sent me in the direction of Paul van Gilder, who, after one conversation in his office prior to my first semester in college, told me that I would really like his particular brand of history. That turned out to be a gross understatement, as I occasionally find myself mimicking his teaching style.

Among my professors, special thanks go to three in particular from my time at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. When I was twenty, I met Kathleen Zebley (now Liulevicius) who, at the beginning of my first semester, informed me that I would never make it to graduate school. (Of course, I had never even thought about graduate school.) At the end of my first semester, and much to my shock, she asked me: “Have you ever considered going to graduate school?” I hope she knows that that question pretty much screwed up the next sixteen years of my life in one way or another. Even with Kathleen’s peculiar form of encouragement, I had no plans to attend graduate school. After mentioning the idea of graduate school to my advisor, Bruce DeHart, he warned me, in no uncertain terms, that graduate school was a horrible idea and that my life would be most miserable should I choose to pursue a graduate degree. He essentially told me to go home and think long and hard about whether I really wanted to do such an absolutely idiotic thing. I do not know how I arrived at my decision—perhaps I thought



(foolishly, as it were) that things could not get much worse—but I returned a few days later to tell him that I wanted to pursue graduate studies in history. I believe that the sadist in him decided to help me get into graduate school, while the masochist in me allowed that to happen. Thank you, Bruce (I think). Finally, Robert Brown encouraged my studies at Pembroke, fostered my almost self-destructive stint in graduate school, and then assisted me as I returned to Pembroke as a lecturer. I sometimes feel as though I may not have deserved the opportunities afforded me by Robert, but I appreciated (and still appreciate, as it were) every single one. I hope I have, in some small measure, justified the support of Robert, Bruce, and Kathleen.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help of two individuals in very particular: Hugh D. Hudson at Georgia State University and Bruce J. DeHart at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. I want to thank Hugh for the weekly discussions about the dissertation, as these always proved beneficial. He consistently cut to the heart of any argument, and in the process, he made me think about how I structured my dissertation. Bruce read every word of this dissertation, and this work is immeasurably better for his recommendations. Considering the fact that much of this dissertation was written after midnight, he had to heap an immense amount of constructive abuse upon the manuscript in order to turn it into a readable product. He invested much time to this project, and never asked for one thing in return (except that I finish, of course). I hope he will accept my thanks as a start. Both of them sought to make me a better writer and a better thinker. I hope I have internalized some of their skills.

A dissertation on such a topic requires the assistance of multiple libraries, and I have the utmost respect and appreciation for the members of the Interlibrary Loan Departments at my home libraries—Pullen Library at Georgia State University and Mary Livermore Library at The

University of North Carolina at Pembroke. The staffs at both took my occasionally arcane references and located the exact document, journal article, or book that I needed without fail. Members of the staff at the Davis Library at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also deserve credit for finding works for me. They also put up with my overdue books as I clawed my way through Potanin's letters, the Siberian Separatist Affair, and many other documents that they loaned to me. Similarly, the staff at the reading room at Tomsk State University's library also proved helpful and friendly. The piles of books, articles, and dissertations on my work desk helped this project tremendously. Last but not least, Valentina Mikhailovna from the reading room at the State Archives in Tomsk was very patient as I tried to learn the ins-and-outs of working my way through a fraction of their holdings.

Speaking of Tomsk, my thanks go to Vadim Zyubanov for getting me there. That is a simple sentence, but there was so much involved in that process that it makes my brain ache to think about all of it. Without his help, I never would have picked up increased skill in Russian, I never would have been able to explore the archives, and I never would have stumbled across such a phenomenal topic. Also, I never would have had the opportunity to meet so many people who shaped my perceptions of Russia in a remarkably positive way.

There are so many people to thank in Tomsk that I hesitate to start naming names, but I must mention three. Thank you, Maya Beshimova. Whenever I was verging on insanity, you were always available for a conversation about nothing in particular, a stroll through the city (even when the temperature was thirty below zero), or a quick dinner. Even now, you help me more than you realize. Thank you, Nastya Shirokikh. I cannot include everything here, but thank you for the walks, the talks, the movies, and then some. Also, thank you, grandma. Yes, after two

trips to Tomsk, I have a Russian grandmother—Valentina Mikhailovna Velin'sh. Thank you for the *borshch* and sympathy, grandma.

A final thanks goes to the members of my committee: Hugh, Bruce, Denise Z. Davidson, and Jared Poley. I appreciate you going through the trouble to read this and provide feedback. I realize that it is a painstaking process, and I could not have found a better group of people with whom to work. That being said, any mistakes that remain in the finished product are mine and mine alone.

AJ

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## PREFACE

Born of the intellectual ferment within the Russian Empire during the period of the Great Reforms, the Siberian regionalist movement sought to push reforms within the empire to what they considered their logical conclusion. Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, and the regionalists who congregated at St. Petersburg University in the late 1850s and early 1860s perceived the Great Reforms as having not gone far enough towards transforming the empire.

Through the course of the Great Reforms, Siberian students in St. Petersburg understood that the changes welcomed by European Russians would not be extended to the non-European provinces of Russia. As regionalists discussed the consequences of the Great Reforms for Siberia, they understood that Siberia needed far-reaching reforms—urban, judicial, educational, economic, and others—if it ever hoped to develop. That required changing the Russian government's impression of Siberia while fostering a vision of Siberia that would unite the people of the region.

According to regionalists, the Russian government had only ever visualized Siberia as a colony of European Russia. As such, the region could never hope to develop within the empire unless the government made a concerted effort to change its secondary status. While some attempted to persuade the government to change direction, others opted to carry the regionalist message to the people of Siberia. Throughout the late 1800s, Potanin and Iadrintsev sought to end the system of exile that, for them, poisoned Siberian Society; to foster education to halt the intellectual brain drain from Siberia; to develop a vision of what it meant to be Siberian; and to transform the region into a vibrant, vital part of the Russian Empire. At each stage of

regionalism's development down to the maelstrom of revolution and civil war, its members found the movement shaped by events beyond their control.

In the chapters that follow, both the regionalist movement and the ideas of Iadrintsev and Potanin are traced from the movement's inception in the 1860s through the revolutionary year of 1917. Chapter one establishes the context—both historically and historiographically—for a study of regionalism. The history of Siberia within the Russian Empire; the context for the Great Reforms; the history of the movement as retold by its members, Soviet historians, and modern scholars; a brief history of the movement for the purposes of periodization; and an examination of some key problems regionalists encountered through the movement's existence all come together to form the necessary backdrop for the larger study.

Chapter two follows the lives of the two key members of the movement (Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev and Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin) and provides a deeper examination of the intellectual background of the movement. An analysis of the intellectual development of these key members of the Siberian circle in St. Petersburg, their attempts to get the Russian government and the Siberian people to understand the Siberia's secondary within the empire, and the government's interpretation of regionalism will show how events pushed regionalism in various directions. The closure of St. Petersburg University in the aftermath of student uprisings in 1861, the failure of A.P. Shchapov's appeal to Tsar Alexander II, the problems in carrying the ideas of regionalism to the people of Siberia, and the government's branding of regionalism as a group bent on secession in the Omsk Separatist Affair all served to constrain the regionalist movement, forcing its members to search for ways to carry their message without running afoul of the government.

Chapter three begins by tracing the timeline of Iadrintsev and Potanin's period in exile and proceeds to examine the shift in emphasis in the regionalist movement's campaign for greater Siberian freedoms. From the early 1860s until the Omsk Separatist Affair in 1865, members of the movement had worked on promoting Siberia's cause to the government, but their arrest and exile forced regionalists to shift their focus for promoting change. Subsequently, they thus sought to develop grassroots organizations within Siberia that would inculcate in the Siberian population both an understanding of Siberia's secondary status within the empire and a desire to change that status. Regionalists mounted a campaign of publications to promote their vision for the region, publishing articles in Siberian newspapers, producing books about the unique nature of Siberia, and opening newspapers such as *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (*Eastern Review*, St. Petersburg and Irkutsk) devoted exclusively to regionalist issues. Edited and published by Iadrintsev, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* published articles devoted to regionalist ideas. Recognizing, however, that the poor level of education among Siberians severely restricted their ability to reach a broad audience, regionalists shifted their emphasis to two key issues: opening a university for Siberia and bringing together like-minded people to focus on regionalist causes (in this circumstance, the nascent Siberian intelligentsia). Unfortunately, the strides made by regionalism came to be affected by Iadrintsev's 1894 suicide.

Chapter four examines the fallout from Iadrintsev's death, as regionalism struggled to regain traction and unity. By default, Potanin became the intellectual leader of the movement, but Iadrintsev's suicide combined with the death of his wife affected his psychological disposition, while the weight of regionalism falling on his shoulders further taxed the almost sixty-year-old Potanin. Although Potanin had worked with Iadrintsev to steer the movement, he had spent much of his intellectual efforts in the wake of the Omsk Separatist Affair in exploring

Mongolia, China, and Asiatic Russia and writing about these experiences, focusing only sporadically on producing works concerning regionalism and its ideology. Between Iadrintsev's death and the 1905 Revolution, Potanin sought to unify the movement while continuing to promote the ideas of regionalism. During this same period, political parties began to emerge in Russia, challenging regionalism for adherents. Potanin, for his part, made a determined effort to keep regionalism separated from politics, believing that the movement could better unite Siberians as a supra-party organization by remaining above politics.

Chapter five traces the transformations within the regionalist movement and Siberian political life wrought by the 1905 Revolution, which forced Potanin and other regionalists to come to terms with the emergence of political parties. With the issuance of the October Manifesto of 17 October 1905, the legalization of political parties, and the formation of the State Duma as a legislative body for Russia, political life blossomed within the region, albeit temporarily. Regionalists worked with various political groups in Siberia, particularly in Tomsk—where Potanin had taken up residence in 1902—to craft political positions that focused on regional needs. The revolution also solidified several ideas in the regionalist doctrine, particularly the need for a Siberian *zemstvo*—a system of local government that focused on elements such as public health and welfare, infrastructure, and education—as a means of providing for regional self-government. Moreover, discussions with other political groups within the maelstrom of revolution reinvigorated the idea of Siberian autonomy. Following governmental crackdowns in the wake of the revolution, however, political activity decreased markedly, and the period between the 1905 Revolution and the February 1917 Revolution represented a lull in regionalist activity.



Chapter six examines the growing level of interaction between regionalists and political parties during the 1905 Revolution and the February Revolution of 1917 and reveals how regionalists, Constitutional Democrats (Kadets), Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), and others struggled within the increasingly repressive political environment in Russia. Although these parties enjoyed an initial taste of political freedom, the Russian government—in 1907—tightened restrictions on these groups. Even in the midst of these struggles, regionalists appreciated just how much the Revolution of 1905 had transformed political life in Siberia. Regionalism began as the intelligentsia's attempt to help Siberians, ostensibly without appeal to political or class loyalties. Following the 1905 Revolution, Potanin and those regionalists who surrounded him continued to keep the movement above political infighting. As he had before 1905, Potanin believed that regionalism should remain a supra-party and supra-class organization. Only by remaining politically separate, he argued, could regionalism represent the best interests of the region rather than the interests of a political party or social group. Divisions still existed in the movement, however, as some wanted closer cooperation with political parties in Siberia. There existed no clear political party with which regionalism sought to associate, as no party proved a perfect fit with the movement's ideology. Consequently, some regionalists migrated from one party to another in the period between the revolutions, while Potanin and the regionalists who surrounded him remained politically unaffiliated. The coming of the Revolution of 1917, however, revived interest in regionalist philosophy yet again, bringing renewed attention to questions of autonomy for Siberia.

The conclusion examines Tomsk in the upheaval of the revolutionary year of 1917, which, thanks to the collapse of the tsarist regime, transformed the political life of the region, bringing regionalism and its ideas to the forefront of political discussions. The conferences and

congresses in Tomsk during 1917 employed regionalist arguments in formulating justifications for self-government in Siberia. Between February and October 1917, these discussions focused on the form that autonomy and self-government should take in Siberia. While the February Revolution transformed political conversations in the region, reinvigorating the concept of autonomy for Siberia, the October Revolution injected an urgency into the question of self-government. Potanin saw Socialist Revolutionaries utilizing regionalist ideology as a thin cloak for the group's anti-Bolshevik activities, and he feared that this would detract from regionalism's message of regional unity and progress. The months following the Bolshevik Revolution saw the rapid emergence of a Siberian Regional Duma as a legislative body for the region, and Potanin found a place in this transformed political atmosphere in Siberia after being elected leader of the new Duma in December 1917. However, Potanin grew disillusioned with the way Socialist Revolutionaries utilized the movement's ideology, and he ultimately abandoned his position in this Duma.

The history of regionalism down through the 1917 Revolutions shows how much circumstances surrounding the movement constantly shaped the movement. Whether discussing the separatist affair, Iadrintsev's death, Potanin's de-facto emergence as the leader of a fractured movement, the political tumult of 1905, or regionalism's revival in 1917, regionalists confronted changing circumstances that challenged them to evolve. Regionalism found itself transformed by the realities of Russian life in multiple situations throughout its history. Furthermore, other elements need to be considered, such as the evolution of regionalist ideas within the military realities of the Civil War and how those ideas became part of the lexicon among Kadets, SRs, and the members of the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia as they struggled against the newly established Bolshevik government. Some historians see the conclusion of the

Russian Civil War as sounding the death knell for Siberian Regionalism, but there remained a deep feeling of self-identification among people of the region as Siberian rather than Russian. The collapse of the Soviet Union saw Siberians revisit the question of Siberia's secondary status within the Russian state, and even today the questions that motivated Siberian regionalism still live. As recently as November 2013, Aleksei Tarasov asked, "Has Siberia had enough of Russia?" In an article detailing why people still look at Siberia as Russia's colony (a colony whose value "is measured in barrels, tonnes and cubic metres"), Tarasov detailed how the idea of Siberia did not really exist in the minds of Russian government ministers.<sup>1</sup> One "Sibiriak" organization promoted ideas and goals for the region that proved closely related to the regionalist vision for Siberia. When asked why they organized Siberian youth meetings in Tomsk in early 2011, Liudmila Strokova, one of the leaders of the "Sibiriak" movement, claimed it was "[b]ecause we have a Siberian identity and Siberian character." Mirroring a more than century-old regionalist argument, leaders of this "Sibiriak" movement argued that any solutions to regional problems cannot start in Moscow but must start within Siberia proper. Naturally, the "Sibiriak" movement, much like the regionalist movement before it, has prompted questions of whether this new movement is agitating for Siberian separatism and independence. Strokovo also said that no matter what the movement is called, searching for answers to problems can help all nationalities—Russians, Tatars, Ukrainians, etc.—who face similar problems.<sup>2</sup> Pushing the

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<sup>1</sup> Aleksei Tarasov, "Has Siberia had enough of Russia?" *OpenDemocracy*, 21 November 2013, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/aleksei-tarasov/has-siberia-had-enough-of-russia> (1 April 2014). Such things should be taken with a little skepticism, of course. There is an excellent source that examines the 1990s and the development of Siberian Regionalism in light of the Soviet Union's collapse: Manuel Castellis and Emma Kiselyova, "Russian Federalism and Siberian Regionalism, 1990-2000," *City: Analysis of Urban Trends, Culture, Theory, Policy, Action*, Volume 4, Issue 2 (2000), 175-198.

<sup>2</sup> "Dvizhenie 'Sibiriaki' budet zashchishchat' zakonnye prava liudei," *Global Sib*, 11 January 2011, <http://globalsib.com/9374/>; quotation from Liudmila Strokova in "Dvizhenie 'Sibiriaki' opredeliaetsia s proektami i tseliami," *Global Sib*, 25 January 2011, <http://globalsib.com/9433/> (Both accessed on 20 January 2015).

question of regionalism to the present day can provide some understanding of modern stresses within the Russian state—Siberia, Dagestan, Chechnya, even the newer problems over Crimea and other territories within Russia. Furthermore, pushing the question of regionalism ahead to the modern day provides some understanding about the evolution of regional crises in other disintegrating empires. These elements certainly appear to be objects for inclusion in future studies, however, and not an aspect under consideration within the current project.

## **1 SIBERIAN REGIONALISM IN EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION**

Siberian regionalism traces the contours of Siberia's history, and the history of that region within the Russian Empire began with Tsar Ivan IV's 1558 charter to the Stroganov family to occupy the territories east of Perm in the Ural Mountains. In order to protect their trade in the region, the Stroganov family received additional charters that gave them permission to push ever further eastward; one of these charters (1574) even gave the family permission to build strongholds along rivers east of the Urals. So the history of Siberia within the empire begins with colonization.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Stroganov family received permission to build strongholds along the Ob, Irtysh, and Tobol rivers, neither the family nor the state proved to be in any hurry to start fighting with the indigenous peoples of Siberia. The tsarist charter to the Stroganovs urged Iakov and Grigorii Stroganov to try and convince the people of Siberia to pay tribute to the state voluntarily, but the fact that the Stroganovs' land claims consisted of a significant portion of the Khanate of Sibir meant conflict with the Khanate and the indigenous peoples was inevitable.

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<sup>3</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin said it better: "Strictly speaking, the history of Siberia is the history of its colonization." Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," in I.S. Mel'nik, ed., *Sibir': eia sovremennoe sostoianie i eia nuzhdy* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo A.F. Devriena, 1908), 279.

When the fight for Siberia came, the Stroganov family relied upon the Cossack leader Vasilii Timofeevich—better known by his nickname Ermak—to lead the fighting. When fighting began over Siberia in 1581, Ermak led several successful raids and defeated the army of Khan Kuchum. In late 1582 Ermak's forces assaulted Kuchum's capital at Isker, suffering an initial defeat before returning to lay siege to the city, defeating Kuchum, and forcing him both to flee the city and to renounce his position as khan of Sibir. In a stroke of genius, Ermak presented the Khanate of Sibir to Tsar Ivan IV rather than to the Stroganov family, offering the tsar a gift of sable, fox, and beaver pelts. Ivan promptly added the title tsar of Siberia to his other official titles.

By the time Khan Kuchum had been defeated, only 150 members of Ermak's Cossack force were left. The winter of 1583-84 also brought famine to Ermak's forces, and in 1585, before supplies and reinforcements could arrive, Kuchum's forces regrouped and struck back, forcing Ermak's Cossacks to retreat from Siberia. Ermak himself drowned after being wounded in the fighting and attempting to swim across the Wagay River. By that time, however, Ivan IV had accepted both the title of tsar of Siberia and the valuable Siberian pelts, and the colonization of Siberia had become official state policy.

The Muscovite state erected wooden fortifications and stockades around the settlements of the old Sibir Khanate. It also established several strategic towns in Western Siberia: Tiumen (1586), Tobolsk (1587), Tara (1594), Verkhoture (1598), Turinsk (1598), Tomsk (1604), and many others. From these cities, Russian settlement spread further to the east, as Russian explorers followed furs and tribute from indigenous peoples. Considering the fact that tribute was exacted in a brutal fashion, conflict with native Siberians could hardly prove surprising. And the government went to great lengths to pacify natives in the region.

During much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Siberian colonization proceeded apace, bringing various groups of people to the region and pushing the evolution of erstwhile fortresses into cities. As trappers and hunters plunged ever deeper into Siberia, eventually reaching the rich fur lands in the region along the Lena River in 1624, cities like Tomsk emerged as administrative centers where natives paid tribute to the Russian state. Also in the seventeenth century, European Russians began migrating to the region in increasing numbers. Similarly, fugitive peasants seeking to escape serfdom, fugitive convicts, and Old Believers also fled to Siberia at this time. As more European Russians migrated into the region, they needed protection from periodic nomadic raids, and the Russian government built new fortresses—such as the Berdsk and Tomsk fortresses—to protect the new settlers. As years went on, industrial production—at such facilities as the Demidov family’s industrial enterprise at Barnaul—increased social organization of Siberian cities. While Siberia evolved, its evolution lagged in comparison to European Russia, and this yawning gap between European Russia and Siberia drove early calls for reform from Siberian intellectuals.<sup>4</sup> Although Siberia lagged behind the western portions of the empire, by the mid-1800s the Russian Empire itself had fallen further behind the other nations of Europe developmentally. Tsar Alexander II (r. 1855-1881), often classified as a cautious and conservative person, moved to enact reforms designed to bring the areas of European Russia into the modern age.

Cries for reform had been building within the Russian Empire for years, but the defeat in the Crimean War of 1853-1856 made Russia’s deficiencies readily apparent to all. In the international arena, Russia had become increasingly isolated during the reign of Nicholas I, and the coalition of enemies that united against her during the Crimean War included the very

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<sup>4</sup> For an exceptional assessment of the early history of Siberia, consult Janet M. Hartley’s *Siberia: A History of the People* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 1-162.

powerful nations of Great Britain and France. Following Russia's defeat in the Crimean War of 1853-1856, many educated Russians, including Tsar Alexander, understood that Russia's position vis-à-vis Europe was untenable.

Defeat in the Crimean War also revealed Russia's economic and industrial backwardness relative to Europe, and many members of the government and society at large attributed a great deal of this backwardness to serfdom. Ending serfdom was perhaps the most well known of the Great Reforms; however, it proved a delicate task, with the key question being how much land peasants should receive—some, all, or none. Peasants believed that they had a right to all of the land; many nobles wanted to provide for freedom for serfs, but without land; and the Russian government ultimately opted to end serfdom and to give peasants much of the land in exchange for redemption payments made over the course of forty-nine years. In the end, however, this proved unsatisfactory to all involved. This dissatisfaction had also been a hallmark of the empire's domestic politics for years.

Domestically, Russia's politics suffered from remarkable instability. Years of repression at the hands of Nicholas I's government had seen many members of the Russian intelligentsia escape abroad. Restrictions on free speech meant that any political publications aimed at Russia would have to be published abroad, such as Alexander Herzen's *Kolokol (The Bell)*, which was published from London and Geneva. Alexander substituted self-censorship and punishment after violations for pre-censorship.

When the government under Alexander lifted restrictions on the press, the Russian intelligentsia, severely limited during the reign of Nicholas I, spoke out against the government in a chorus that rapidly reached a crescendo. Abolishing serfdom, reforming municipal governments, establishing *zemstvos*, and revamping Russia's legal system were designed to

reinforce a Russian government sagging under the weight of autocracy. Understanding the nature of the Russian government's decision to enact reforms is paramount to an appreciation of the resultant dissatisfaction of various members of the Russian (and Siberian) intelligentsia.

While many members of the intelligentsia desired reform, Alexander II—the “Tsar Liberator”—undertook reforms as a last resort. While it is beyond question that the Russian government took the initiative in reforming the state, the fact of the matter is that Alexander II was a reluctant reformer. While Alexander pursued reform to save the Russian system from collapse, Russia's liberal intelligentsia desired transformations within Russian society. Nor were members of the intelligentsia alone in their dissatisfaction. Emancipation proved insufficient for Russia's peasants, who believed that freedom should be accompanied by all of the land that they had farmed. Intellectuals and liberals were disappointed by the weak nature of the Great Reforms, seeing them as merely a first step towards the broader reforms needed to transform Russia. Being the reluctant reformer that he was, however, Alexander proved uninterested in pursuing reforms that would have satisfied the various disaffected groups within the Russian Empire.<sup>5</sup> This was the social milieu in which Siberian regionalism emerged in the mid-1800s.

Starting in the late 1850s and early 1860s, members of the Siberian Circle at the universities in St. Petersburg attempted to develop organizational approaches to regional questions in the Russian Empire. Concluding that Siberia needed urban, judicial, and land reforms to develop properly, Siberian regionalists struggled with what they deemed to be Siberia's secondary status within the Russian Empire. Much to the chagrin of the regionalists, the Russian government treated Siberia as a place of exile and hard labor, as a territory for natural

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<sup>5</sup> A good edited volume about the Great Reforms is Ben Eklov, John Bushnell, and Larissa Zakharova, eds., *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Larissa Zakharova also produced a high-quality examination of the Great Reforms: “Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Reforms of the 1860s in Russia,” *Soviet Studies in History* Vol. 29, Issue 4 (Spring 1991), pp. 6-33.



resources, or as a region totally unworthy of development. These young Siberians grappled with the nature of the relationship between European Russia and Siberia, seeking to reconceptualize the relationship between Siberia and the rest of Russia. While they may have toyed with ideas of separatism, they slowly put together a system of thought for an emerging regionalist movement, which included ending the policy of Siberian exile, developing the sciences in the region, and, consequently, pushing Siberia along the path towards becoming one of the more important regions of Russia.

Two different periods and two intellectual tendencies defined regionalism. Regionalism as it emerged in the 1850s in St. Petersburg focused on issues that were essentially social in nature. Siberian students enrolled in the institutions of higher education in St. Petersburg—particularly the university—formed a Siberian fraternity. Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, and Nikolai Ivanovich Naumov, were among the first members of the Siberian Circle in St. Petersburg, which hoped to foster the rapid development of Siberia. They were also a symptom of a significant problem facing Siberia. As young men seeking higher education, their only recourse was to flee Siberia and seek a university education in European Russia. They understood that arresting the attendant brain drain on Siberian cities constituted the first key to unlocking Siberia's development, and this could be remedied through the opening of a Siberian university. Members of the fraternity thus made several attempts to realize their ideas, typically while working through regional offices or publishing articles in Siberian newspapers.

Deemed revolutionary by the Russian government in 1865, around fifty members of the movement suffered arrest and faced charges of promoting Siberian separatism. Tried by the government, many members were sentenced to periods of prison and terms of exile, during which they continued working on problems of regional concern. After returning from exile in the

1870s and 1880s, members of the Siberian Circle became active in the formation of a proper regionalist movement. These regionalists thought of Siberia as a special region, inhabited by a particular people who shared a specific historical and ethnographical background. Iadrintsev addressed the unique nature of Siberia and the consequences of Siberia's being treated as a virtual colony in his book *Sibir' kak koloniia v geogragicheskgom, etnograficheskome, istoricheskome otnoshenii* (*Siberia as a Colony in Geographical, Ethnographical, and Historical Senses*). In this book Iadrintsev wrote about eliminating hard labor and exile in Siberia, about developing a local press, and about removing the artificial restrictions that had been placed on Siberia's development, such as the stripping of its natural resources in programmatic fashion. The ideology of regionalism also called for an increase in the migration of peasants and their provision with land. Potanin and Iadrintsev published articles in both Russian and Siberian newspapers concerning the history and culture of Siberia, particularly urging the opening of a Siberian university. As a result, the regionalists ultimately played a decisive role in the chartering (1878) and establishment (1888) of the Tomsk Imperial University.

Another vital period for regionalism dates to the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917 and Civil War of 1918-1921. Following on the heels of the rapid transformations at the end of the nineteenth century and the social upheaval of the Revolution of 1905, regionalists revised some elements of their program (mainly questions about socio-economic development). During the Revolution of 1905, regionalists focused on the idea of autonomy for Siberia and the necessity for developing local systems of self-government. In the heat of 1905 in Tomsk, Potanin and other members of the local intelligentsia issued "Draft Regulations on the Basic Principles of *Zemstvo* Institutions in Siberia," which explained how a future Siberian Regional Council could serve as a system of government. The "Draft Regulations" devoted special attention to provisions

concerning the structure of this regional government. The authors argued that Siberia had to be recognized as an integral part of Russia. Simultaneously, they revived discussions concerning increased autonomy and development within the region. Regionalists hoped that the imperial government would be sympathetic to their cause and provide Siberia with more autonomy within the empire, even writing into the “Draft Regulations” the possibility of a Regional Council that could serve as a Siberian legislature centered on the needs of local self-government. From the late 1850s into the early twentieth century, regionalist theory constantly evolved.

While there occurred something of a lull in regionalism following the 1905 Revolution, the Revolutions of 1917 and the Civil War revived regionalist slogans, especially the idea of a regional legislature. According to historian Mikhail Shilovskii, political attitudes among regionalists shifted from more bourgeois-liberal interests (education, increased autonomy for indigenous groups, increased economic independence) towards political/separatist interests that included closer association with various political groups that included the Constitutional Democrats and the Socialist Revolutionaries. Regionalists had already theorized about Siberian separatism as a distant, future possibility; however, in the wake of the February Revolution, it became a distinct possibility for the very near future, and regionalists worked closely with various political parties to make separatism a reality.<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, there occurred splits among regionalists due to disagreements about the principles on which Siberian autonomy-cum-independence should be based. Some favored the unitary principle—like the federal system similar to the United States. In the course of the political debates following the February Revolution, regionalists and Socialist Revolutionaries found themselves supporting the creation of a Siberian Regional Duma, which would make laws concerning the internal life of the region.

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<sup>6</sup> Mikhail V. Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo v obshchestvenno-politichskoi zhizni regiona* (Novosibirsk: Izdatel'skoi dom “Sova,” 2008), 6.

Shilovskii asserted that surveying the literature concerning regionalism could prove difficult because some historians have made a large number of unilateral, inconsistent, and inaccurate judgments, which produced gaps in the historical literature.<sup>7</sup> Historiographically, there exist multiple interpretations of regionalism from the second half of the nineteenth century, and this makes for a varied picture of the movement. With so many works devoted both to nineteenth-century regionalism as a whole and to the activities of various members of the movement, this variation is understandable. Considering the number of members who participated in shaping elements of regionalist ideology, it can be difficult to identify a unified vision of the movement unless one focuses on two or three key figures.<sup>8</sup>

In a sense, the history of regionalism started among the movement's members in the late nineteenth century. Following the suicide of Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev—the movement's chief ideologist in the 1870s and 1890s—various regionalists produced a number of obituaries in an effort to come to terms with the fallout from Iadrintsev's death. These obituaries praised Iadrintsev's intellectual and scholarly heritage, lauded his contributions to Siberia in general, and commended his philosophical gifts to regionalism in particular.<sup>9</sup> Potanin, who became the chief theorist of regionalism following Iadrintsev's death, urged Mikhail Konstantinovich Lemke to write a biography of Iadrintsev that would paint his life in a positive light.<sup>10</sup> Other members of the movement, including Potanin, had positive biographical sketches written about them.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>9</sup> For a couple of references, see Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev: Nekrolog" *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* (1894) Kn. 23, № 4, pp. 170-175; "N.M. Iadrintsev: Nekrolog" *Novoe vremia* (St. Petersburg), (1894) № 6565.

<sup>10</sup> Mikhail Konstantinovich Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev: Biograficheskii ocherk k desiatiletiuu so dnia konchiny* (St. Petersburg: Tipo-Litografiia "Gerol'd," 1904).

In the period leading to the celebration of Potanin's eightieth birthday, a number of works praising him and his contributions to Siberia appeared in newspapers and books.<sup>11</sup> Considering that Potanin played a key role in formulating the ideas and theories of regionalism at every stage of its development from its inception as the Siberian fraternity at St. Petersburg University to the declaration of a Provisional Siberian Regional Union under Potanin's chairmanship in early 1918, any evaluation of Regionalist theory must include him. Potanin recognized the vital role that his actions played in any understanding of regionalism, and he thus began reflecting on regionalism at the same time that others commenced assessing the history of the movement.<sup>12</sup> Shilovskii notes that Potanin took the time to write his memoirs, treating the ideas and ideals of regionalism with a deft hand based upon his knowledge that posterity would scrutinize his assessments of the movement.<sup>13</sup>

Following the Russian Civil War, regionalists scattered to various places: Czechoslovakia, China, and elsewhere, and they continued their analysis of the movement while in exile. I.A. Iakushev, one-time chairman of the Siberian Regional Duma, said that regionalism could serve as the key to understanding the situation in Siberia during the revolutionary era. The slogans and ideas of regionalism emerged as a powerful factor during the revolutionary era. The Siberian Regional Duma established following the Bolshevik Revolution utilized the ideas and slogans of regionalism in the ideological clashes with the Bolsheviks as both sides tried to rally

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<sup>11</sup> For a few references, see Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, compiler, *K biografii G.N. Potanina: Sbornik k 80-letiiu so dnya rozhdeniya G.N. Potanina: Izbrannyya stat'i i biograficheskii ocherk* (Tomsk: Tipo-litografiia Sibirskogo t-va Pechatnogo Dela, 1915); V.A. Vatin, "Iubilei Potanina i molodaya Sibir'" *Sibirskii Arkhiv* (1915), № 7-9; Petr Vasil'evich Vologodskii "G.N. Potanin – kak publitsist Sibiri i obshchestvennyi deiatel'" in *Pravo i fin.-prom. zhizn' Sibiri* Number 1 (November 1915), 2-12.

<sup>12</sup> See Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, *Oblastnicheskaya tendentsiya v Sibiri* (Tomsk: T-va Pechati. Dela, 1907).

<sup>13</sup> Much of what would constitute Potanin's memoirs was published in serial form in *Sibirskaya zhizn* (Tomsk) between 1913 and 1917. Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 5-6.

support from Siberians.<sup>14</sup> S.G. Svatikov, a former White official who served with General Anton Denikin, saw in his analysis of regionalism from inception to the Revolution of 1905 increasing interaction between regionalists and the various political parties of Siberia, particularly the SRs and the Kadets. In bringing up these connections, Svatikov, who was also a member of the regionalist movement, posed a couple of questions intended to frame his interpretation of the nature and the legacy of regionalism: How can an understanding of regionalism be complete without understanding the interactions between the regionalists and the various Siberian political parties during the period following the Revolution of 1905? And how can historians separate the *real* cooperation between political parties and regionalism from the aspects of regionalism that these parties simply co-opted as a tool for waging ideological struggle during the upheavals of revolution and Civil War?<sup>15</sup> For the most part, regionalism was a collection of ideas shared by members of the movement, but there was no official political organization among supporters of regionalism. While they associated with various political parties, their associations aimed at the creation of a broader Siberian organization that encompassed various political parties under a regionalist banner. Regionalists aspired to speak for Siberia in general terms, but in a pan-class, pan-political manner.

Because regionalists engaged with various political parties, these parties developed their own interpretations of the movement as well. The first real Marxist-Leninist attempts to understand and analyze the program and activities of Siberian regionalism started during the interrevolutionary period, and members of the Siberian Bolsheviks produced the earliest works. Siberian Marxists argued that while the works of people such as Potanin, Iadrintsev, and others

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<sup>14</sup> I.A. Iakushev, "Fevral'skaia revoliutsiia i sibirskie oblastnye s"ezdu (K istorii oblastnogo dvizheniia v Sibiri)," *Vol'naya Sibir'* 2 (1927): pp. 13-40.

<sup>15</sup> S.G. Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir': K istorii sibirskogo oblastnichestva v XIX veke* (Prague: Izdatel'stvo Obshchestva Sibiriakov v Csr., 1929).

had certain merits, the bulk of regionalist theory tended towards liberalism. For Siberian Bolsheviks such as M.K. Vetoshkin, V.A. Vatin, and N.F. Chuzhak, the true failure of Siberian regionalism lay in its focus on purely Siberian regional interests and its failure to recognize the necessity for the violent overthrow of the existing socio-political order. While the regionalists claimed to be striving to cut across class and political boundaries in terms of representing the interests of Siberia, Bolsheviks in Siberia saw nothing in the movement other than the local interest of the liberals.<sup>16</sup>

Following the Bolshevik victory in the Russian Civil War, Soviet historians' assessments of regionalism shifted from emphasizing the movement's liberal-democratic nature to its bourgeois nature. Soviet historians also focused on the emergence of regionalism and the development of the movement's ideology. According to historians M.A. Gudoshnikov, S.F. Koval', and G.V. Krusser, who produced analyses of the foundational period for the movement, the varied nature of the movement itself contributed to the diversity of historical opinion on the nature of the movement.<sup>17</sup> These historians contend that, as the movement shifted its focus towards unifying the Siberian intelligentsia, it assumed a more bourgeois, as opposed to a purely liberal, character.

Within the Soviet historical literature concerning the movement, one group claimed that there was a simple evolution from liberalism towards this liberal-bourgeois tendency over a period of decades whereas another group argued that regionalism consisted of two differing tendencies within the movement: a populist group that centered on Iadrintsev's vision of

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<sup>16</sup> D.I. Zaitsev, "Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Sibiri" *Obrazovanie* (1906) № 3; V.E. Volozhanin, "Iz istorii sibirskogo oblastnichestva," *Utro Sibiri* (Tomsk) Vol. 14, № 15 (18 January 1917).

<sup>17</sup> M.A. Gudoshnikov, "Klassovaya priroda oblastnichestva: (Po povodu kn. G. Krusser, "Sibirskie oblastniki" in *Budushchaia Sibir* (Novosibirsk) № 1 (1931): pp. 100-105; S.F. Koval', "Kharakter obshchestvennogo dvizheniya 60-kh godov XIX veka v Sibiri," in *Obshchestvenn-politicheskoe dvizhenie v sibir v 1861-1917 gg.* (Novosibirsk, 1967); G.B. Krusser, *Sibirskie oblastniki* (Novosibirsk: Zapsibotdelenie, 1931).

regionalism and a liberal group led by Potanin. Historian Marina Georgievna Sesiunina used her study nineteenth-century regionalism to show how the movement evolved from liberalism towards reaction and, ultimately, counterrevolution. But was that the be-all and end-all of the situation? According to Sesiunina, other historians have looked at the regionalist movement through the blinders of class struggle, and those blinders obscured many Soviet histories of regionalism.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, even Sesiunina occasionally fell into the trap of class struggle in her interpretation of the movement.

This quick survey of Soviet historical literature shows neither a consensus on the class nature of regionalism nor a unified viewpoint on the place and the role that this movement played in the rest of the country. Part of the problem stems from the series of crises that the movement and its members experienced throughout the course of the movement's existence.

In a very real sense, the crises faced by regionalists did as much to shape the movement as conscious programmatic developments among the movement's key members. An examination of these crisis points reveals how regionalists had to adapt their arguments and frame their vision for Siberia in newer and more ingenious ways. Key events that determined the evolution of the movement included the arrest, conviction, and exile of several members of the movement in the Omsk Separatist Affair in 1865; the death of Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev in 1894; the Revolution of 1905; and the revolutionary year of 1917. Using these crisis points to analyze the regionalist movement, this study aims to explain how the movement was pushed in certain directions, ultimately closing with a brief examination of how various political organizations co-

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<sup>18</sup> Marina Georgievna Sesiunina, *G.N. Potanin i N.M. Iadrintsev – ideologi sibirskogo oblastnichestva [k voprosu o klassovoi sushchnosti sibirskogo oblastnichestva vtoroi poloviny XIX v.]* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo Universiteta, 1974), 8.



opted the movement's ideas as tools in the counterrevolutionary period and the Russian Civil War.<sup>19</sup>

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In 1865, government officials found copies of a proclamation to Siberian patriots among members of the Omsk Cadet Corps and another similar proclamation in Irkutsk. In light of these discoveries, the Russian government struck at the nascent regionalist movement. The handwritten proclamation discovered in the Omsk Cadet Corps exhibited radical ideas that advocated the immediate secession of Siberia and broader freedoms for the entire Empire.<sup>20</sup> This proclamation declared that people who had fled to Siberia were captives of the Russian Empire, which then filled the region with criminals and corrupt inhabitants. The proclamation argued that best course of action for the Siberian people would be the path taken by America, and that required that Siberia prepare the young people for a revolt.<sup>21</sup>

The proclamation discovered in Irkutsk did not openly advocate an uprising against the Russian Empire. Instead this proclamation addressed the problems of the system of Siberian exile and the colonial style of governing Siberia from St. Petersburg, which used local officials who pillaged the resources of the region. The discovery of this second proclamation, however, hinted at a conspiracy in the minds of Russia's governmental officials. They conducted a thorough search the rooms of Omsk cadets in May 1865, looking for any additional evidence. In Gavril Usov's room, government agents discovered a lithograph machine and copies of works by Pierre Proudhon, Alexander Herzen, Potanin, and Iadrintsev.<sup>22</sup> After being interrogated by government agents, Usov named N.S. Shchukin as another member of the movement, and in a

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<sup>19</sup> For the revolutions in Russia, an examination of the city of Tomsk rather than a broad examination of Siberia will help to limit the study in a beneficial way.

<sup>20</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," *Russkaia mysl'* vol. 25 (June 1904), 154-155.

<sup>21</sup> Svatikov, *Rossia i Sibir'*, 58.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

search of Shchukin's apartment, government officials found another document that mirrored the Omsk proclamation. Shchukin, in interrogation, named other members of the movement, and the Russian government established a commission of inquiry at Omsk that would look into the separatist affair, gather evidence, and, if necessary, make arrests.<sup>23</sup>

After more than forty arrests and more than two years of investigations, the Omsk inquiry commission finished its examination and passed the information to St. Petersburg. In the years before the inquiry commission convened in Omsk, oppositional groups dissatisfied with what they considered the weak nature of the Great Reforms had begun to emerge within the Russian Empire. The emergence of these oppositional groups provoked reactionary tendencies from the Russian government, and the discovery of the proclamations to Siberians in Omsk and Irkutsk provoked a stern reaction from the government towards the regionalists implicated in the Omsk Separatist Affair. The Senate finally passed judgment on 20 February 1868, and after almost three years of waiting, Iadrintsev, Potanin, and other members of the group learned their fate. At the request of Aleksandr O. Diugamel, Governor General of Western Siberia, both Iadrintsev and Potanin served their terms outside Siberia. Potanin received fifteen years of hard labor (later reduced to five after the intervention of P.P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskii), while Iadrintsev received ten years of penal servitude. Iadrintsev and Shchukin lost their property rights and suffered exile to Arkhangel province. The government sentenced several other members of the movement to exile and hard labor.<sup>24</sup> Many of the people involved in the separatist affair denied that they were separatists, claiming that the idea of separatism was nothing more than a dream for a distant

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<sup>23</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2002), 17-18.

<sup>24</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir'*, 61. Following his conviction in the separatist affair, the government exiled Potanin to Finland.

future.<sup>25</sup> This crisis helped to shape the nature of the movement, as its members realized that they had to find new paths to change in Siberia, particularly since the tsarist regime proved unwilling to foster change in Siberia.

At its inception in the 1860s in St. Petersburg, the movement was more of a reformist group dedicated to remedying Siberian problems, particularly those touching on the social, political, and economic life of the region. Members of the group took every opportunity to make known their discontent with Siberia's position within the empire. For regionalists, key issues included the treatment of Siberia as a colony of European Russia, the troubles engendered by Russia's system of exile and hard labor, the brain drain created by the absence of a Siberian university, the plight of aboriginal peoples, and the desire for a level of Siberian autonomy within the Russian Empire, but the closing of the Omsk Separatist Affair concluded the earliest period for the regionalist movement as well. Like many groups that emerged during the transformative period of Russia's Great Reforms, the regionalists possessed a boundless optimism common to the intellectual mentality of the day. They believed that the intelligentsia, government bureaucrats, and even the "tsar liberator" himself—Tsar Alexander II—would extend the reforms that initially applied exclusively to European Russia across the empire. From the movement's inception as a St. Petersburg Siberian Circle to the crisis of the Omsk Separatist Affair, regionalists looked to the state—the great demiurge of change—to transform society. Afansii Prokof'evich Shchapov's appeal to Alexander II revealed how regionalists looked to the tsar to foster Siberian development. Shchapov articulated his vision for Siberia not through the press, but in letters to Alexander II, urging the decentralization of the Russian state, the bringing of *zemstvo* organizations, the construction of larger regional councils, the distribution of local

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<sup>25</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Shizn' i trudy A.P. Shchapova," *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (23 June 1883).

taxes for local needs, and the passage of measures to improve the intellectual, economic, and moral life of the region. Alexander received Shchapov's ideas with suspicion, even making notations indicating that Shchapov should be watched closely.<sup>26</sup> As this nascent period for regionalism approached a moment of crisis and the regionalists found themselves the objects of governmental searches, investigations, and criminal proceedings, they grew disillusioned, forced to wake up from their Left Hegelian/Alexander Herzen-infused vision of the state as the vehicle of change and to seek new methods for achieving their goals.

In searching for a group that could replace the government as the prime mover for change, regionalists managed to simultaneously popularize their vision for Siberia. Iadrintsev acknowledged that the separatist affair dealt the movement a blow; however, even while on trial, members of the movement continued their research into the broader topics of Siberian history, society, culture etc. They even continued to publish articles that came to the attention of the general public, to Siberia's nascent intelligentsia, and to the members of the Russian government.<sup>27</sup> Though they served prison terms or periods of exile, both Iadrintsev and Potanin continued their work towards popularizing regionalist ideas, publishing articles on Siberia's problems, and theorizing about possible solutions. Once their terms in prison or in exile concluded, Potanin and Iadrintsev moved in separate directions. While Potanin embarked on scientific investigations in Mongolia, China, and Central Asia, Iadrintsev devoted his time and effort to producing works to popularize regionalist conceptions of Siberia's nature, needs, and future.

Based upon his work, Iadrintsev became the chief ideologist of regionalism. After he finished his period of exile, Iadrintsev settled in Omsk in 1875 at the invitation of the West

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<sup>26</sup> S.S. Bykova, N.I. Briukhanova, K.N. Shirko, and A.V. Iakovenko, eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik* (Tomsk, Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Vodolei," 2002), 52.

<sup>27</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 157; Also in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 31-32.

Siberian Governor-General and worked in the Western Siberian Directorate for the next five years, during which time, he compiled statistical information and archival resources on Siberia, ultimately using this material to produce the main ideological work of regionalism, *Sibir' kak koloniia*.<sup>28</sup> When he finished his stint in the directorate in 1881, Iadrintsev returned to St. Petersburg and began publishing *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, which remained the key regionalist periodical until his death in 1894.<sup>29</sup> Through publishing and popularizing their ideas following their return from exile, regionalists sought to popularize regionalist theories.

Regionalists hoped to secure broader popularity for their ideas, as regionalism had a relatively narrow audience—typically among publishers, educators, and professionals. Regionalists worked diligently to popularize their ideas among the nascent Siberian intelligentsia and to foster the further development of that group by working towards the opening of a Siberian university. By constructing a vision of Siberia that included putting an end to Siberia's colonial status within the Russian Empire, spreading the Great Reforms—particularly *zemstvo* reform—to Siberia, introducing a new court system for Siberia, spreading of education—not just university education—throughout Siberia, guaranteeing rights for all Siberians—even the indigenous peoples of the region, and providing better social organization throughout the area, regionalists hoped to foster broad support for the movement.<sup>30</sup> For Iadrintsev, the spread of these ideas became even more important because Siberia, throughout its existence within the empire to that point, had had to deal with harassment and injustice at the hands of the Russian government. He

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<sup>28</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia: K iubeleiu trekhsotletii, Sovremennoe polozenie Sibiri, Eia nuzhdy i potrebnosti, eia proshloe i budushchee* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia M.M. Stasiu., 1882). There are multiple versions of this book available. As this text will migrate from one to another, it will specify which version by including the copyright year in parentheses prior to the page number.

<sup>29</sup> Initially published in St. Petersburg, Iadrintsev would move *Vostochnoe obozrenie* to Irkutsk, where it would stay until local authorities closed it in 1906.

<sup>30</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia*, (1882), 445.

believed the people deserved stability, and Iadrintsev hoped that the extension of basic rights to Siberia would strengthen the society and bring stability to the region.

Stability may have been a watchword for the movement, but achieving that stability required that the Russian government fulfill what regionalists considered the long-standing needs for Siberia. For Iadrintsev, the colonial status of Siberia had to change. While the development of Siberia was intertwined with colonization, in terms of administration, Iadrintsev believed that Russian administration of the province was at best inadequate and at worst openly hostile to the region's needs.<sup>31</sup> Regionalists believed the Russian government's administration of Siberia had kept the region underdeveloped, trapping it in a perpetually colonial state. It did no good to compare Siberia to European Russia, Iadrintsev argued, but if one looked at the development of other regions that had been conquered by the Russian Empire at the same time as Siberia, then Siberia's backwardness became all the more apparent. Regionalists perceived administrative officials to have been corrupt careerists typically uninterested in local needs, and thus, the best hope for transforming the administration lay in peasant self-government and a division of powers—local representative assemblies with a broader Siberian assembly—within Siberia's administrative region. But these represented only part of the puzzle for regionalists. Other long-standing needs—problems that regionalists had hoped to bring to the attention of Siberians since they first started holding discussions in St. Petersburg—had to be addressed as well. Yet, as the regionalists discovered in the separatist affair at Omsk, the central government was not the solution to the ills of the region. Even the general government of Siberia could not offer any relief. In the minds of government officials in St. Petersburg, the region was so backward that non-Siberians had to be sent to the region to manage its affairs. Mikhail Speranskii had been the most successful governor of the region, managing to enact several reforms that aimed to foster

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 384.

Siberian development. However, even his reforms could not to correct all of the mismanagement in the region.<sup>32</sup> Observers such as Petr Kropotkin argued that advances had been made in Siberia during the governorship of Count N.N. Murav'ev-Amurskii.<sup>33</sup> Iadrintsev, however, saw the regional government as traditionally staffed with outsiders who had no knowledge about Siberia and no desire to learn about the region. Iadrintsev believed these outsiders simply reinforced the system of corruption and mismanagement, which many Siberians accepted as normal because they did not know what good government should look like.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, part of the solution to Siberia's problems lay in exposing the failures of the government while educating people on the proper way to foster Siberian development.

For regionalists, the nascent Siberian intelligentsia represented the best vehicle for regionalist ideas. Only the intelligentsia could fully appreciate both the deep-seated problems plaguing Siberian society and the way regionalist theory could help the region. Spreading regionalist ideas among Siberians would be vital, and Iadrintsev wanted to make sure that Siberians had a journal that would address local problems within Russian society. In editing and publishing *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, Iadrintsev focused on special regional topics, including broader Russian or European affairs only if they affected Siberia. The goal was to awaken the Siberian intelligentsia and the region's young people to their obligations to Siberian society. Potanin said that the Great Reforms had decided a number of issues in Russian public life and forced the Siberian intelligentsia to pay attention to the shortcomings of social life in Siberia.

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<sup>32</sup> Marc Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1956); Marc Raeff, *Michael Speransky: Statesman of Imperial Russia, 1772-1839* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1957).

<sup>33</sup> Petr Alekseevich Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* Volume 1 (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1899), 198-200. Kropotkin claimed Murav'ev-Amurskii had "[gotten] rid of the old staff of civil service officials, who considered Siberia a camp to be plundered ..." (pg. 198)

<sup>34</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia: V geograficheskom, etnograficheskom i istoricheskom otnoshenii* (St. Petersburg: I.M. Sibirikov, 1892), 634.

Ultimately, according to Potanin, the intelligentsia had to recognize the necessity of serving the peasantry: “A native intelligentsia especially, coming from the local peasantry, must put themselves in the sacred duty of service to the native peasants.”<sup>35</sup> If regionalists believed that the intelligentsia represented one group that they had to persuade, then Siberian youths represented another vital group that regionalists had to convince to follow a regionalist path of development for Siberia.

Getting young people to buy into the regionalist vision for Siberia had its potential problems, as well. For instance, Iadrintsev worried that the youth of Siberia would continue their previous trends when it came to education—fleeing Siberia for an education in the capitals and thereby continuing the traditional brain drain that had hampered Siberia’s intellectual life. As a youth Iadrintsev was one of the few students who received a gymnasium education in the region, even though he did not always enjoy the experience.<sup>36</sup> While few Siberians could afford to send their children to school, the ones who did found that their children were more likely to leave Siberia for the capitals, while the few who returned confronted hostility from a peasant population that no longer recognized their way of life.<sup>37</sup> The existing system of education in Siberia was unsuited to the needs of the region. Indeed, when Iadrintsev returned to Siberia, the largest cities in the region—Omsk, Tomsk, and Tiumen—could only boast a population of around 10,000 people each, and during Iadrintsev’s childhood, the educational system was grossly inadequate for the purposes of building an educated class in Siberia. However, the numbers of Siberians who wanted an education steadily increased, and Iadrintsev, Potanin, and other regionalists believed that the development of a university in Siberia could foster the

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<sup>35</sup> Potanin, *Oblastnisheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri*, 11.

<sup>36</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 8-9.

<sup>37</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir kak koloniia*, (1882), 398. This mirrors the experience of many young men and women who participated in the populist movement in the 1870s.



development of an educated class, that this educated class could teach the youths of Siberia, and that this overall educational uplift would promote regional development.<sup>38</sup> Regionalists needed a local university to improve the intellectual life of the region and foster the development of an educated class whose members understood the needs of the region and wanted to help solve the problems of Siberian society.

For two decades following his return from exile, Iadrintsev worked on fashioning the movement's ideological position and strengthening Siberia's intellectual foundation. His death in 1894 dealt several staggering blows to the regionalist movement. First, for Potanin, Iadrintsev's death came a few months after his wife's passing during an expedition to Tibet in September 1893.<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, the news of Iadrintsev's death in mid-1894 plunged Potanin into an even deeper crisis, characterized by depression. As he said in a letter to V.I. Semidalov in June 1894: "I envy his [Iadrintsev's] death. First of all, it was sudden, and hence there was no long suffering; in a telegram, it said he died suddenly. Secondly, the position of those who leave is always enviable to those who remain in the desolate room."<sup>40</sup> Potanin also had to deal with the question of whether Iadrintsev's death was a tragic accident or suicide: "At first, the news about the death of Nikolai Mikhailovich was not so sad as the news that he had poisoned himself deliberately."<sup>41</sup> Potanin grew concerned about the public's perception of the regionalist movement given the sudden suicide of its key ideological voice. He appealed to Mikhail

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>39</sup> Vladimir Afanas'evich Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin: Kratkii ocherk ego zhizni i nauchnoi deiatel'nosti* (Moscow: Tipo-litografiia T-va I.N. Kushnerev, 1916), 14-16.

<sup>40</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 17 June 1894, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, eds. N.A. Logachev and Iu.P. Kozlov (Irkutsk: Izdatel'stvo Irkutskogo universiteta, 1990), Volume 4, 253-254.

<sup>41</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 22 June 1894, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 262.

Konstantinovich Lemke to produce a book dedicated to Iadrintsev's life, potentially elevating Iadrintsev to the status of a martyr for the cause of Siberia.<sup>42</sup>

Potanin also had to find someone who would take over the main publication for regionalism—*Vostochnoe obozrenie*. Ultimately, Iadrintsev's heirs sold the paper—with Potanin's help—to Ivan Ivanovich Popov, a political exile and revolutionary Populist living in Irkutsk. While the early issues said that the paper would “continue in the same way and keep the same principles which were adopted by its founders,” Potanin soon found himself at odds with Popov, as the paper published information that Potanin deemed inconsequential to matters of Siberian interest.<sup>43</sup> Potanin and Popov continued to clash through the late 1890s, but the big clash between Popov and Potanin did not happen until after the Revolution of 1905. Still, this conflict never represented a fundamental rift in the nature of regionalism as much as a clash between two men, neither of whom wanted to compromise his positions on certain aspects of the movement.

Potanin and Popov clashed over the former's editorship of *Baikal*, a newspaper headquartered in Irkutsk and owned by the latter, and this motivated Potanin to leave Irkutsk for Krasnoyarsk at the end of 1901.<sup>44</sup> He thought to stop in Krasnoyarsk for a temporary rest before moving to Tomsk.<sup>45</sup> During the summer of 1902, Potanin left Tomsk temporarily, but he returned for the winter, telling Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Klements, “I have finally settled for the

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<sup>42</sup> The result was Lemke's biography: *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev* (note 8 for full reference).

<sup>43</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (30 October 1894).

<sup>44</sup> Apparently, Popov brought Potanin to Irkutsk with the intention of letting him edit *Baikal*, but some information showed that the Police Department's Special Section had started examining Potanin's prior political activity, arrest, conviction, and imprisonment. For Popov, this was a good enough reason to make him uncomfortable with letting Potanin edit *Baikal*. See: Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Oblastnichestvo i *Vostochnoe obozrenie*,” in *Sibirskii vestnik politiki, literatury i obshchestvennoi zhizni*, No. 130 (22 June 1905), 2.

<sup>45</sup> Potanin to I.V. Palibin, February 1902, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, eds. N.A. Logachev and S.F. Koval' (Irkutsk: izdatel'stvo Irkutskogo universiteta, 1992), Volume 5, 52.

winter in Tomsk and am informing you of my address ....”<sup>46</sup> Tomsk held much appeal for Potanin. It had grown to well over 60,000 people, having become the only real academic center east of the Urals with the opening of the Imperial University in 1888, a key administrative center, and the scene of an active cultural life. As Potanin told Klements, “The city is growing in all senses, and in appearance and in mentality, the strength of the individuals have started to seep into the activities of many individuals.”<sup>47</sup> What Potanin had envisioned as a temporary stop in Tomsk became permanent.

While in Tomsk, Potanin held fast to his beliefs that regionalism should be a pan-Siberian concept and that any attempts to tie the ideology of regionalism to a particular political philosophy threatened the movement. The decision to move to Tomsk in 1902 put Potanin in the midst of a social and academic community that sought to revive public life, and the friends who surrounded Potanin reflected many of the diverse intellectual interests within the city. His closest friends during this period included members of the local Socialist Revolutionary party—S.P. Shvetsov, N.V. Sokolov, A.T. Bychkov, and others—and faculty members at the university and the technical institute in Tomsk—such as E.A. Zubashov, V.A. Obruchev, A.V. Witte, M.I. Bogolepov, and others whose liberal political views aligned with his own. In certain respects, Potanin’s gathering of this diverse group of people around him represented one way in which regionalists sought increased stability for the movement in the wake of Iadrintsev’s death.

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<sup>46</sup> Potanin to Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Klements, 16 November 1902, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 60. Klements was a Populist figure who had studied at the University of Kazan as an ethnologist and archaeologist and who had played a part in the “to the people” movement. He eventually became the editor of the Populist paper *Zemlia i volia*. The Russian government eventually arrested Klements and exiled him to Siberia. For a little additional information on Klements, see Petr Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* translated by Nicolas Walter (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1971, 1999), 303-304.

<sup>47</sup> Potanin to Dimitri Aleksandrovich Klements, 16 November 1902, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 60.

As late as December 1901, Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov had written to Potanin about the uncertain future of the regionalist movement. "The idea of regionalism," Adrianov said, "is totally dissolved—vanished as an intelligent group of Siberians in the surging mass of intellectuals of Siberia. I myself hardly know to which god to pray."<sup>48</sup> With Tomsk as a stable location for Potanin, however, and with a growing group of like-minded people surrounding him, regionalism began a slow process of stabilization. Potanin asserted his position of primacy within the movement, publishing articles in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* (*Siberian Life*—Tomsk) and surrounding himself with the youth of the city by working in the Imperial Tomsk University. However, the quest for stability within the movement following Iadrintsev's death was cut short by instability within the country.

New and sometimes radical political groups had emerged within the Russian Empire and had won a considerable following in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Socialist Revolutionaries, Social Democrats, and Union of Liberation offered ideological alternatives to the regionalist movement. Add to the emergence of these political groups a foreign policy crisis for Russia, and the stage was set for dramatic social dislocation. The Russo-Japanese War started in January 1904 (O.S.) and proceeded disastrously for the Russian military. The Japanese attack on Port Arthur wrecked the Russian Pacific Squadron stationed there. While the Japanese laid siege to Port Arthur, the Russians sent the Baltic Fleet to relieve the Russian troops on the Liaotung Peninsula. When this newly rechristened Second Pacific Squadron met the Japanese at the Battle of Tsushima Straits in May 1905, the Japanese annihilated it. By the time an armistice was signed, Russia was in the throes of revolution.

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<sup>48</sup> Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov to G.N. Potanin, 7 December 1901, *Dorogoi Grigorii Nikolaevich...: Pis'ma G.N. Potaninu* edited by N.V. Serebrennikov (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2007), 158.

Strikes among the workers had steadily increased in the first years of the twentieth century, reaching a crisis point with the strikes at the Putilov works in St. Petersburg in December 1904. Then, on “Bloody Sunday” in St. Petersburg, 9 January 1905 (O.S.), a procession of workers led by Father Georgii Gapon approached the Winter Palace in order to present a petition to Tsar Nicholas II. Troops guarding the palace fired upon this peaceful procession, shattering the traditional vision of the tsar as the little father who looked after his people. The immediate result was some 200 to 1000 deaths, approximately four times that number wounded, and a rising wave of public indignation that spread throughout Russia.<sup>49</sup> As the revolutionary events spread across Russia, they came to the Siberian city of Tomsk, which, after Potanin moved there in the early 1900s, had been the center of the Siberian regionalist movement.

During the Russo-Japanese War, Tomsk was a city where military units were formed, military officers received training, and the wounded and prisoners were housed. Many residents of Tomsk experienced the war firsthand after being sent to the front. In the fighting’s early months, soldiers and officers regularly contributed to Tomsk newspapers, particularly *Sibirskaiia zhizn’*, providing reports from the front, analytical materials concerning military operations, and even photographs. Newspaper reports about the war and everything connected with it attracted considerable interest in Tomsk, with most of this interest patriotic in nature. However, over time the war exacerbated the already poor economic and social situation in the city. Military necessity placed a higher priority on the transportation of troops to the front, and the congestion on the Trans-Siberian Railroad meant a steep decrease in the supply of food and essential goods for Tomsk. The concomitant increase in prices in Tomsk aggravated the social problems in the city.

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<sup>49</sup> The numbers of killed and wounded in “Bloody Sunday” vary widely depending upon which sources are used.

A similar situation evolved in St. Petersburg prior to the Revolution of 1905. The Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905—specifically the privations of war and Russia's disastrous conduct of the war—helped trigger the Revolution of 1905.

As the war dragged into 1905, Tomsk, much like the rest of the empire, experienced socio-political unrest. On 2 January 1905, students in Tomsk came to the Tomsk Assembly building and read a proclamation in favor of Sunday schools, which represented an attempt on the part of volunteers to spread literacy.<sup>50</sup> Radicals within this group advocated the overthrow of autocracy and led the collective in revolutionary songs.<sup>51</sup> On the holiday of St. Tatyana (12 January), protesting students and several of the local graduates from Moscow University organized a student banquet, and Potanin gave an oppositional speech.<sup>52</sup> A delegation of Social Democrats, wanting to turn the banquet into a revolutionary meeting, interrupted the banquet, calling for a popular uprising against the tsarist regime and the convening of a Constituent Assembly. Even though the banquet eventually dispersed, the assembled group collected money to help political exiles in the region and continued with their revolutionary songs.<sup>53</sup> The evolution from revolutionary songs to revolutionary upheaval came to Tomsk in the wake of Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg.

The Revolution of 1905 pushed regionalists into closer association with political groups in Siberia, as Social Democrats, Kadets, Socialist Revolutionaries, and others attempted to

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<sup>50</sup> For more information on Sunday Schools in Imperial Russia, see Reginald Zelnik, "The Sunday School Movement in Russia, 1859-1862," *Journal of Modern History* Volume 37, Number 2 (June 1965), 151-170.

<sup>51</sup> *Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Tomskoi oblasti* (Subsequent citations as *GATO*), F. 3, Op. 70, D. 2658, L. 6-7; Mikhail Ivanovich Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1966), 121.

<sup>52</sup> N.M. Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda ot osnovaniia do nashikh dnei* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1999), 169-170; *GATO*, F. 3, Op. 70, D. 2568, L. 6-7.

<sup>53</sup> V.G. Vinogradova, ed., *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie 1905-1907 gg. v Tomskoi gubernii: Sbornik dokumentov (K 50-letiiu pervoi russkoi revoliutsii)*, (Tomsk: State Archive of Tomsk Oblast', 1955), 21-22.

envision Siberia's place in a rapidly changing Russian Empire. As one of the earliest historians of the movement (and a member of the regionalist movement), S.G. Svatikov tried to situate nineteenth-century regionalism into the broader evolution of Russian liberation movements. Svatikov noted how regionalists to a certain extent associated and cooperated with members of various movements and political parties prior to the Revolution of 1905, revealing how these associations grew into close ties during the Revolution of 1905.<sup>54</sup> Even Potanin, whose desire to keep regionalism aloof from political entanglements had guided the movement since Iadrintsev's death, associated with members of various political parties throughout the Revolution of 1905. Even though the newspaper was unofficially the organ for the Kadet party organization in Tomsk, Potanin worked closely with the editors of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, editing the weekly illustrated appendix to the newspaper in 1903 and 1904, producing articles on regionalist issues for the newspaper, and using *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* to publish his memoirs in serialized form between 1913 and 1917. Also, during his early years in Tomsk, Potanin's closest friends—S.P. Shvetsov, N.V. Sokolov, and A.T. Bychkov—were members of the local Socialist Revolutionary party. He also associated with faculty members at the university and technical institute in Tomsk whose liberal views—many of them were Kadets—aligned with his own.

At the beginning of the revolutionary crisis in Tomsk, Potanin found himself under arrest briefly, but after his release, he and several close acquaintances produced the "Draft Regulations on the Basic Principles of *Zemstvo* Institutions in Siberia."<sup>55</sup> Even though Potanin had no interest in turning regionalism into a political party or officially associating with political parties, following 1905, regionalists and Kadets worked closely with one another. This opened the regionalist movement to influence from political parties during the final years of its existence.

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<sup>54</sup> See Svatikov's *Rossiia i Sibir'* (note 13 above for full reference).

<sup>55</sup> V.V. Spetsov, "Vopros o samoupravlenii Sibiri v period revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg.," in *Vestnik Tomskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta* Number 4, Issue 20 (2012), 138.

Regionalists shared some similarities with the Kadets—particularly the Kadets’ liberal political priorities, which worked well with the regionalist goals of educational reform, economic development, the end of the exile system, etc. However, strict centralist tendencies among Kadets led them to oppose any kind of federated state or regional/cultural autonomy that had been favored by regionalists since the movement’s inception. For the most part, Kadet/Regionalist agreement on liberal priorities could not override the disagreements over questions of autonomy.

While regionalists and Kadets were closely associated during the Revolution of 1905 and worked well with one another for more than a decade, after the fall of the autocracy in 1917, regionalists drifted from their Kadet affiliations towards closer associations with the Socialist Revolutionaries. While, according to historian Norman G.O. Pereira, “The Socialist Revolutionaries characteristically had no set policy regarding regionalism, but shared many of its populist-agrarian assumptions and its non-Marxist orientation,” this changed dramatically in the course of 1917.<sup>56</sup> Whenever regionalists associated with a political party, certain elements of their respective ideologies refused to mix. Regionalists and Kadets could agree on liberal reforms but not on state structure. Regionalists and SRs could agree on the concept of a federated state with national-cultural autonomy for the *inorodtsy* (natives); yet, the regionalists’ liberal political views meant that they stopped short of advocating the socialist elements of the SR platform. As the revolutionary year of 1917 unfolded, regionalists engaged in discussions with Socialist Revolutionaries on the future of Siberia’s political life in a situation where increased Siberian autonomy or potential independence appeared a real possibility.

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<sup>56</sup> Norman G.O. Pereira, “Regional Consciousness in Siberia before and after October 1917,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* Vol. XXX, No. 1 (1988), 116. Pereira briefly analyzes Kadet attempts to “minimize the issue [of autonomy]” in dealing with regionalism.



The increasing interconnectedness between the SRs and regionalists during 1917 represented a final crisis for regionalism. The first rumors about the February Revolution came to Tomsk in early March, via telegrams which arrived at the editorial offices of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*. Many citizens of Tomsk came to the newspaper offices for information about the revolution. Moreover, the leaders of the Tomsk Duma, chaired by Mayor Pavlin Alekseevich Lomovitskii, announced the creation of a Committee of Public Order and Safety as the local organ of the newly founded Provisional Government, with local lawyer and city Duma member Boris Mitrofanovich Gan elected chairman of the committee.

The revolutionary situation evolved rather quickly in Tomsk. In early March Socialist Revolutionaries and Kadets held their first legal meetings, parties started to publish their own newspapers, and unions like the Ukrainian Club and the Lithuanian Cultural and Educational Society held their first meetings. There also occurred marked increases in political activity among religious denominations like Orthodox Christians and Muslims. These groups discussed political issues relative to workers and peasants and questions of democratization in the region. In light of the increasing political activity in the city, the Committee of Public Order and Safety decided to hold elections for a Provincial People's Congress.

The Committee of Public Order and Safety created the Provincial People's Congress and entrusted it with setting up congresses for the provinces, counties, and cities. When elections for the Provincial People's Congress were held on 16 April 1917, the turnout among citizens of Tomsk was high—sixty-seven percent. The first meeting of the Provincial People's Congress convened four days later, on 20 April. Subsequently, on 18 May, an estimated 300 members of the Provincial People's Congress elected an Executive Committee led by the aforementioned Gan; however, as events unfolded, the Provisional Government refused to recognize the legality

of the elections, and thus, the Committee of Public Order and Safety had to prepare for new elections based upon legislation enacted by the Provisional Government. Before these elections could take place, however, a compromise was reached after the Provisional Government made Gan the Provincial Commissioner. The committee proceeded to oversee the affairs of the province until December, seeing it through the construction of Siberian *zemstvo* institutions. In December, the committee handed authority to the Siberian Regional Duma. This Duma, following the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917, would become Siberia's anti-Bolshevik alternative within the Tomsk *guberniia* (province).

While the Provincial People's Congress transformed into the new governing body for the province, the social situation in Tomsk deteriorated. The privations accompanying war continued for the citizens of Tomsk. Several enterprises closed throughout the city, creating economic difficulties for the workers. Furthermore, a poor harvest in 1917 engendered a bread shortage and a concomitant increase in prices. Attempts to halt grain exports from the province proved unsuccessful, and farmers responded to governmental price controls by cutting off supplies. This exacerbated social tensions, manifested by conflicts between workers and owners over pay and the length of the workday. On the heels of privation and social unrest, the Provisional Government amnestied convicted criminals and thereby worsened an already critical situation within the city.<sup>57</sup>

Upon arriving in the city, many former felons entered service in the Tomsk garrison. Claiming that they were engaging in "revolutionary searches," these soldiers perpetrated looting and robbery. That June, the Provincial and City People's Assembly *and* the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, declared martial law in Tomsk, with one result being the arrest of almost

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<sup>57</sup> A.P. Akachenok and I.M. Razgon, eds. *Sovety Tomskoi gubernii: Mart 1917 – mai 1918 gg. dokumentov i materialov* (Tomsk: Zapadno-Sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo (Tomskoe otделение), 1976), 21-24.

two hundred recently amnestied criminals. Yet, this did not end rumors of food hoarding, impending pogroms, or the all-too-real threat of famine. As citizens protested the rapidly deteriorating conditions in Tomsk, interest in political life diminished and a weariness with democracy set in.<sup>58</sup>

The problematic situation in Tomsk set the backdrop for the various regionalist meetings and congresses that debated regional autonomy in the late summer, early autumn 1917. In August, one of these regionalist meetings floated the idea of creating independent governmental organizations for Siberia. Later, the First Regionalist Congress, which met in Tomsk on 8 October 1917, adopted this position and approved a “Statute on the Regional Administration of Siberia” for the development of Siberia “based on national or territorial autonomy.” Members of the First Regional Congress made it clear that they intended to push autonomy at the Constituent Assembly, expected for later in the year.<sup>59</sup>

Many of the 179 members (which was a smaller turnout than expected) in the First Regionalist Congress were either SRs or were associated with the party. A smattering of Mensheviks and Kadets and a small fraction of unaffiliated regionalists made up the rest of the congress.<sup>60</sup> Potanin had tried to keep politics separate from regionalism, but political associations had to be cultivated in this congress. Political infighting dominated the First Regionalist Congress, as Socialist Revolutionaries, Kadets, Mensheviks, and regionalists all put forward their ideas on a potential government for Siberia. These divisions revealed the problems endemic to party-dominated regionalist meetings. The unaffiliated Potanin—nominally the leading voice of both the Congress and the regionalist movement—was elected to chair the Executive

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>59</sup> *Pervyi sibirskii oblastnoi s'ezd, 9-17 oktiabria 1917 v g. Tomske. Postanovlenie s'ezda* (Tomsk: 1917), 1.

<sup>60</sup> Pereira, “Regional Consciousness in Siberia,” 118-119.

Committee of the Congress. This sparked an uproar among the Menshevik delegation, which left the congress due to the prominent positions given to “bourgeois ideologues” like Potanin. As for the Kadets and the SRs, the former protested the socialist orientation of the SR-dominated congress, while the latter sought to strengthen their domination of the First Regionalist Congress.<sup>61</sup>

As the First Regionalist Congress in Tomsk started pushing for autonomous government in Siberia, events in the rest of Russia shifted in radical new directions. In the wake of the Kornilov Affair, Vladimir Lenin set the Bolsheviks on course for a seizure of power. The Tomsk Bolsheviks, feeding off the increasing malaise in the city, actively agitated and propagandized for the party, and this translated into remarkable gains in local elections. For example, in the elections to the Tomsk Duma, the Bolsheviks garnered an extremely high percentage of votes—some thirty-two percent—which put them in position to dominate the city’s government. Indeed, one of the Tomsk’s leading Bolsheviks, Nikolai Nikolaevich Iakovlev, played a key role in the Committee for Public Order and Security, becoming, after the elections in the autumn of 1917, one of its important members.<sup>62</sup>

Events in Tomsk changed yet again following the Bolshevik Revolution in October. The citizens of Tomsk were divided on the Bolshevik Revolution itself. On the one hand, several pro-Bolshevik revolutionary meetings took place (in the Tomsk Garrison, for example), with on the other hand, influential newspapers (the Kadet-controlled *Sibirskaiia zhizn’*, for example) consistently published negative editorials about the Bolshevik coup. To complicate matters further, even the Tomsk Bolsheviks proved divided on the question of power. Though the city’s

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<sup>61</sup> Mikhail V. Shilovskii, “Pervyi sibirskii oblastnoi s’ezd (oktiabr’ 1917 g.),” *Voprosy istorii Sibiri XX veka* (Novosibirsk: Novosibirsk universitet, 1998), pp. 53–55.

<sup>62</sup> A.R. Pugachev, “Nikolai Nikolaevich Iakovlev,” *Bortsy za vlast’ Sovetov* (Tomsk: Tomskoe nkizhnoe izdatelstvo, 1959), 300–301.

Bolsheviks had enjoyed a level of success in elections to the city duma and had even created a Revolutionary Committee on 26 October 1917, they opted *not* to proclaim soviet power in the city at that time. Only in early December, after a meeting of the West Siberian Union of Soviets and the arrival of new leadership in Tomsk, did the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, in an appeal "to the citizens of Tomsk," declare itself the "representative of supreme Soviet power in Tomsk."<sup>63</sup> Perhaps the most important aspect of the Bolshevik Revolution was that, among regionalists and other political parties, the Bolshevik seizure of power injected an urgency into the idea of Siberian autonomy that had been lacking, whether as autonomy for autonomy's sake or as a touchstone of resistance to the Bolsheviks. As regionalists had theorized on the political life of Siberia and the potential for regional autonomy from the movement's inception, the slogans and ideas of regionalism became weapons in ideological clashes during the power struggle against the Bolsheviks.<sup>64</sup>

Once the Tomsk Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies declared itself the true representative of power in Tomsk, the Bolsheviks set about consolidating their power. In the process, they confronted spontaneous disturbances engendered by the lack of food, economic problems (both within the Tomsk Soviet and within the city), conflicts between workers and employers, and an explosion of crime in the city. The Bolsheviks also had to deal with the Tomsk garrison. In an effort to reign in the garrison, they abolished ranks and titles, dismissed most of the officers, and demobilized the garrison itself. Unfortunately, these measures created a new problem for the Bolsheviks, as many of these people, left without money or prospects, went on to form the core of the anti-Bolshevik resistance in the region. To replace the Tomsk

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<sup>63</sup> A.P. Akachenok, et al., eds. *Bor'ba za vlast' Sovetov v Tomskoi gubernii (1917-1919 gg.): sbornik dokumental'nykh materialov k 40-letiiu Velikoi Oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii* (Tomsk: Partiinyi arkhiv Tomskogo obkoma KPSS, 1957), 182.

<sup>64</sup> Iakushev, "Fevral'skaia revoliutsiia i sibirskie oblastnye s"ezdu," pp. 13-40.

Garrison, the Bolsheviks fashioned a Red Guard unit from the workers and students of Tomsk. Ultimately, as the country degenerated into civil war, the Bolsheviks, in early 1918, incorporated the 500 members of the Tomsk Red Guard into the Red Army.<sup>65</sup>

At the same time that the Bolsheviks proclaimed power in Tomsk, the Extraordinary All-Siberian Regional Congress took place in the city. Meeting from 7 to 15 December 1917, the Extraordinary Congress called for elections to create a new governing body for Siberia—the Siberian Regional Duma—which would be the first attempt at an autonomous government for Siberia. Eventually, this would become the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia (PGAS) in Vladivostok. In response, Tomsk Bolsheviks officially came out in opposition to both the Congress and any attempt to establish a Duma for Siberia. Against these objections, the Extraordinary All-Siberian Regional Congress began drafting a constitution for Siberia that vested political power in the new Siberian Regional Duma. After various regions and provinces in Siberia held elections, the Duma officially convened against Bolshevik protests on 7 January 1918. Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin would ultimately be elected chairman of this regional Duma. His aversion to political affiliation and Socialist Revolutionary dominance in the Siberian Regional Duma prompted Potanin to step down as chairman before the Duma would even convene. It took time for members of the Duma to arrive in Tomsk from throughout Siberia, and the congress did not have a quorum until 21 January.<sup>66</sup>

This Siberian Regional Duma proved short lived. On the same day that the Duma finally managed a quorum, the Tomsk Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies moved to liquidate what it clearly saw as a rival for political power. The first meeting for the Duma was set for 2 February 1918, but the Bolsheviks officially dissolved the Duma on 25 January, and on the night

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<sup>65</sup> *Znamya revolyutsii* (23 February 1918).

<sup>66</sup> Akachenok, et al., *Bor'ba za vlast' Sovetov v Tomskoi gubernii*, 182.

of 26 January, the Bolsheviks had the Red Guard seal the Duma building and arrest Duma delegates as they arrived in Tomsk. About forty delegates, who had escaped arrest, elected an emergency council under the leadership of Ivan A. Iakushev, a regionalist and a Socialist Revolutionary from Irkutsk. The remnant of the group also set up the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia under the leadership of Petr Ia. Derber. The SRs received approximately half of the cabinet posts in the PGAS, which ultimately moved east to Vladivostok. The Kolchak Coup subsequently consumed this provisional government.<sup>67</sup>

For students of Russian history, the story of regionalism should sound quite familiar, especially when compared to other intellectual movements within the Russian Empire from the same period. Regionalism, when studied in conjunction other intellectual movements of the mid-to-late 1800s, follows a similar trajectory, albeit with one caveat: regionalists never proved as revolutionary as groups like the Populists. The Soviet historian G.V. Krusser convincingly argued that regionalism proved to be a mainly bourgeois movement aiming at liberal-intellectual goals, and its adherents never looked at themselves as members of a revolutionary movement.<sup>68</sup>

Krusser's caveat aside, Richard Wortman's *Crisis of Russian Populism* sheds some light on the basic path of intellectual movements in Russia during the late imperial period.<sup>69</sup> Populism, like regionalism, flowered during the period of the Great Reforms. As the reactionary period of Nicholas I gave way to the reformist reign of Alexander II, the people's view of the tsar as the person who could solve the ills of Russian society became reinforced. The imperial government pushed reforms designed to reform and strengthen autocracy. As these Great Reforms shattered

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<sup>67</sup> Mikhail V. Shilovskii, "Sibirskaya oblastnaya Duma," *Sibirskaya starina: Kraevedcheskii al'manakh* № 6, (1994). For an analysis in English, see the introduction to Vologodskii's *Chronicle: Petr Vasil'evich Vologodskii, A Chronicle of the Civil War in Siberia and Exile in China: The Diaries of Petr Vasil'evich Vologodskii, 1918-1925* Two Volumes (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2002), pp. 7-76.

<sup>68</sup> Krusser, *Siberskie oblastniki*, 3-6.

<sup>69</sup> Richard Wortman, *The Crisis of Russian Populism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967).

traditional elements within Russian society, members of the Russian intelligentsia weighed the Great Reforms in the balances and found them wanting. For the Russian intelligentsia, reform fostered by the government did not address all of the ills within Russian society, and the Great Reforms, geographically speaking, did not meet needs throughout the empire, covering, as they did, only the twenty-nine provinces of European Russia and leaving the other Russian regions and provinces (such as Siberia) untouched by reform. Members of the Russian government found themselves unprepared for the forces unleashed by reform. In attempting strategically to shatter a few traditions through the Great Reforms, government officials discovered that “[T]radition lost its aura of sanctity ....”<sup>70</sup> In attempting to introduce reform in an incremental and limited fashion, the Russian government, rather than keeping reform conservative, saw the spirit of reform transferred to the generation of young intellectuals who came of age during that period. This reforming spirit prompted the intelligentsia to question tradition and push for further change.<sup>71</sup>

If the intelligentsia of the early 1860s could call tradition into question with the goal of creating a more just society, it had to work on a new foundation for that society. For the populists, peasants fit the bill. In this respect, there was a distinct disconnect between Populism and regionalism. Regionalists had to construct an idea of Siberia and get people to buy into this idea before they could use peasants or the peasant commune to construct their vision of a Siberian society. Regionalists never fully came to terms with the problem of how to construct the regionalist vision of Siberian society—through the peasants, through Siberian youths, through

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<sup>70</sup> Wortman, *The Crisis of Russian Populism*, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Cynthia Whittaker’s “The Reforming Tsar” offers another resource that examines perspectives from elite members of Russian society on the duty of the tsar to reform society: Cynthia H. Whittaker, “The Reforming Tsar: The Redefinition of Autocratic Duty in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” *Slavic Review* Volume 51, Number 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 77-89.



the intelligentsia, or through the emerging political parties in the early 1900s—and they thus continually struggled with the problem of finding the appropriate audience for their ideas.

The love of science as it developed in the second half of the nineteenth century represented another element that regionalism shared with Populism. For Populists, studies of the peasantry satiated the thirst for facts and knowledge that would help them understand and shape rural life. Populists compiled statistical accounts, published them, and studied them carefully. Regionalists, much like the Populists, looked to statistics to reveal both the problems in Siberian society (like statistics on exiles) and the ways to alleviate these problems.<sup>72</sup> Statistical analyses represented only one aspect of their interests. As members of the intelligentsia, regionalists, like Populists, pushed their statistical interests into economics, archaeology, ethnography, and other areas of analysis to understand and to shape the region.<sup>73</sup> Various members of the regionalist movement traveled through Siberia and Central Asia to compile ethnographic information about the various peoples who lived in the regions. Potanin conducted several expeditions throughout these regions, while Iadrintsev carried out archaeological excavations that have proved invaluable to modern historians.

Similarly, regionalists and Populists both encouraged the youth to participate in their respective movements. Populist Vera Finger could not get youths to go to Saratov, even though it was a well-organized region. Georgii Plekhanov said that the youth of St. Petersburg were

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<sup>72</sup> Some of the best statistical material on the consequences of exile and hard labor on the Siberian population comes from Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev's *Russkaia obshchina v tiur'me i ssylke* (St. Petersburg, Tipografiia A. Morigerovskogo, 1872).

<sup>73</sup> A list of the various works of many regionalists—particularly Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev—looks like a statistician's dream: "Etnologicheskie osobennosti sibirskogo naseleniia," *Tomskie gubernskie vedomosti* No. 15 (23 April 1865), No. 16 (7 May 1865), and No. 17/18 (14 May 1865); "Istoricheskie ocherki russkoi ssylki v sviazi s razvitiem prestuplenii," *Delo* No. 10 (1870); "Rezultat tiuremnoi reformy," *Nedelia* (St. Petersburg) No. 21 (1874); "Kolossal'naia tiur'ma: Ocherk nashei shtrafnoi kolonizatsii," *Nedelia* (St. Petersburg) No. 42-43 (1874). This is, understandably enough, a sample of the statistical works of Iadrintsev. More information on Iadrintsev and his works can be found in Briukhanova and Bykova, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 150-171.

interested in the Don Cossacks, but he could not persuade them to leave St. Petersburg to become revolutionary agitators in the Don region. Regionalists had to deal with an intellectual drain in Siberia, as the youths left the region to study in the capitals. Finding a better education and a more lively social existence in Moscow and St. Petersburg, these youths proved hesitant to return to the region. Consequently Iadrintsev lamented that those youths who remained in Siberia lacked the level of education necessary to grasp the basic tenets of regionalism, Marxism, or Populism.

Some basic problems of Russian Populism mirror those of the regionalist movement. For example, as Siberian regionalism evolved—and especially as members of Russia's nascent political parties sought to utilize elements of regionalist ideology—the regionalist movement, much like Populism, became more difficult to define ideologically. Separating regionalists from members of the inchoate political movements in early twentieth century Siberia verges on impossibility, particularly in light of the fluidity of political definitions during this period. Similarly, while Iadrintsev represented the chief ideologue for regionalism at one point, the movement consisted of several members who espoused differing points of view; therefore, it is difficult to find one explicit regionalist doctrine that encompassed the entire movement in a coherent fashion. Accordingly, matters of primary concern to one regionalist proved immaterial to other members of the movement. As one would never find a clear-cut doctrine to Populism, so too there was no single philosophical, doctrinal, or ideological current that ran through the regionalist movement. A few key ideas served to hold both groups together and give them a semblance of cohesion. As regionalism itself evolved, problems or strategies that garnered tremendous interest at one stage of development in the movement waned in their importance to the movement.

This difficulty in nailing down the ideological nature of regionalism should not obscure the intellectual efforts of the movement. The people who made regionalism and Populism work represented a small part of the *shestidesiatniki* (the sixties' generation) who came of age during the 1860s and who wanted to ameliorate the plight of the common people. The problems that both groups faced in trying to realize their respective visions should not obscure the deeper significance these movements had for the region and the country. Writing about the Populists, Richard Pipes hinted that the movement represented semantic construct created by Marxist revolutionaries in the late 1890s to paint groups that did not accept a strict Marxist interpretation in a negative light. According to Pipes, this Marxist way of looking at the movement gave Populism a level of coherence that was actually an illusory property (at least in theory). In this sense, Populism could be considered "a political attitude, devoid of specific programmatic content."<sup>74</sup> Wortman argues that the seeming lack of specific programmatic content confirms his analysis of Populism as a movement that constantly struggled with the question of how to carry out its vision for Russian society. Regionalists and Populists shared similar ideas. For example, the Populist vision of how the peasantry and their agrarian socialism could serve as a means for establishing socialism in Russia proved similar to the regionalist conception of how peasant society in Siberia could serve as a potential foundation block for an increasingly autonomous Siberia. Acknowledging how coming of age in the intellectual milieu of the 1860s shaped both Populists and regionalists can provide a key analytical framework for the study of regionalism. Wortman's analysis of the Populists' attempts to come to terms with their vision for Russian society offers valuable lessons for the study of regionalism. Movements are not ideology; they are composed of flesh-and-blood people. Regionalism encompassed real people who struggled

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<sup>74</sup> Richard Pipes, "Narodnichestvo: A Semantic Inquiry," *Slavic Review* Vol. XXIII, No. 3 (September 1964), 452.

with real problems in a constantly evolving situation. The twists and turns, eddies and ripples in regionalism reflect the adherents' attempts to come to terms with reality as the currents of life constantly shifted regionalism in new and unexpected directions. These currents did almost as much to shape the regionalist movement as conscious ideological choices on the part of the movement's members.

## **2 CAPTIVES OF THE EMPIRE**

The period from roughly 1860 until the close of the Siberian Separatist Affair in 1868 saw the regionalist movement emerge as a small circle of Siberian students in the University of St. Petersburg and grow into a group of intellectuals dedicated to helping Siberia achieve a position of equality within the Russian Empire. Early discussions within the Siberian circle focused on Siberia's secondary status in the empire and the necessity of enacting reforms that could elevate the region and its people to the stature due them. The members of the circle considered just what reforms—social, political, and educational—would help them achieve their overarching goal. Regionalists in this early period conceptualized reform for Siberia as a government-sponsored process, with at least one Siberian writing letters of appeal directly to Tsar Alexander II. After student unrest in 1861 motivated the government to close the university in St. Petersburg, many members of the Siberian circle returned to Siberia, carrying the ideas and philosophy of regionalism to cities throughout the region. Once in Siberia, regionalists had to formulate an ideology that they could convey to their fellow Siberians. By writing articles and eventually two proclamations designed to rally support to the regionalist cause, members constructed a viable ideological foundation for the movement, but they also aroused the suspicion of the Russian government, which began to see the movement as a radical organization

bent on separating Siberia from the Russian Empire. This Siberian Separatist Affair saw regionalists arrested and transported to Omsk for examination before a commission assembled for the purposes of hearing evidence related to this “affair.” The commission deemed that the regionalist movement constituted a separatist plot designed to break Siberia away from Russia, and it sentenced several members of the movement to periods in prison and exile. Events such as the closing of the university at St. Petersburg (which pushed the regionalists out of the capital and back to their home region) and the findings in the Siberian Separatist Affair (which convinced regionalists that the Russian government had no interest in transforming Siberia’s status within the empire) shaped the regionalist movement. The vision of the tsar as the demi-urge for change within the Russian Empire, which, by the middle of the nineteenth century, had been a common position among members of the Russian intelligentsia for more than a hundred years, was shattered by events in the early 1860s, leaving regionalists, like so many other intellectuals, searching for extragovernmental means to foment transformations within Russian society.

Although Siberian regionalism originated in the late 1850s and early 1860s, any in depth discussion of the movement must begin with a brief examination of its two biggest proponents: Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev (1842-1894) and Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin (1835-1920). Deeply influenced by people like Afansii Prokof’evich Shchapov and Petr A. Slovtsov among others, Iadrintsev, Potanin, and many other regionalists, began their odyssey, like so many of their counterparts in the Russian intelligentsia in the 1850s and 1860s, not in their home region but in the Russian capital of St. Petersburg. Within the intellectual milieu of St. Petersburg University, like-minded students formed a Siberian circle dedicated to examining Siberian society, its uniqueness, and its potential for the future.

A chief theorist of regionalism, Potanin was also a geographer, ethnographer, botanist, and a specialist on eastern literature. Born in a Cossack village near Omsk to a relatively prosperous family, Potanin enrolled in the Omsk Cadet Corps in 1846, and by the time he graduated in 1852, he had met several important people in the region, including a member of the Petrashevsky circle, S.F. Durov, and the well-known explorer P.P. Semenov.<sup>75</sup> While serving in Omsk, Potanin used his free time to study some Siberian history within the Omsk archives, and this early work impressed Semenov, who, according to Potanin, urged him to continue his education at the Imperial University in St. Petersburg. Semenov even helped the young Potanin get out of his military service so he could study at the university.<sup>76</sup> However, Potanin needed money for the trip to the capital.

To secure money for the trip to St. Petersburg, Potanin called on a relative who lived in the city of Tomsk, the gold miner Gorokhov. While neither Gorokhov nor merchants Tomsk were able to help him, Potanin's relative gave him a letter of introduction to present to the exiled anarchist Mikhail A. Bakunin, who was in Tomsk at the time. The two men had meetings and discussions in Bakunin's home.<sup>77</sup> Through these meetings, Bakunin introduced Potanin to several influential men, including local military officers like A.A. Zerchaninov and leaders in Siberian mining industry such as Aleksandr Ermolaevich Frese and Ivan Dmitrievich Astashev. These men, at Bakunin's urging, helped Potanin procure transportation as a passenger on the annual gold and silver transport from Siberia to European Russia.<sup>78</sup> Bakunin even persuaded

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<sup>75</sup> K. Dubrovskii, *Rozhdeniye v strane izgnaniia* (Petrograd: Tipografiia "Viktoriia," 1916), 243-244.

<sup>76</sup> Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 5-7.

<sup>77</sup> Viacheslav Aleksandrovich Dolzhikov, *Bakunin i Sibir': 1857-1861 gg.* (Novosibirsk: Izdatel'stvo Novosibirskogo universiteta, 1993), 47-49.

<sup>78</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri: Vospominaniia*, Volume 6, E.I. Belen'kii, V.G. Odínokov, E.D. Petriaev, V.P. Trushkin, and I.I. Ianovskii, eds. (Novosibirsk: Zapadno-Sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1983), 103.

Astachev to give Potanin one hundred rubles for the journey.<sup>79</sup> Very early on, Potanin had made a connection with a city that would figure prominently in his later life.

Upon arrival in St. Petersburg in March 1859, Potanin joined a lively group of fellow Siberian students. Traditionally, Siberians had gone to Kazan to study at the university, as it was closer than the capital and the cost of living in Kazan was lower than that in St. Petersburg. However, in 1859 Kazan University closed some of its departments, and thus, some Siberians ventured to St. Petersburg. At the Imperial University in St. Petersburg, Potanin entered the Natural History Department and the Physics/Mathematics Departments.<sup>80</sup> Soon, he became acquainted with Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, Innokentii Vasil'evich Fedorov-Omulevskii, Nikolai Ivanovich Naumov, and others, with whom he formed the first Siberian circle in St. Petersburg. This circle engaged in the study of the region. The formation of an intellectual circle was not unique to Siberians in the capital city. Other intellectuals had formed circles during the late 1850s and early 1860s with the goals of discussing political news, the state of the Russian Empire, and possible political development within the empire. Similarly, those Siberians in St. Petersburg formed a circle devoted to their region, the role of Siberia within the Russian Empire, and possible plans to develop the region.<sup>81</sup>

In response to student discontent and dissatisfaction with the terms of the 1861 emancipation of the Russian serfs, the Russian government temporarily closed the university's doors, interrupting Potanin's education. Potanin had participated in this student unrest, and in

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<sup>79</sup> Aleksei Valer'evich Malinov, "Sibirskii zemliacheskii kruzhok v Peterburge – pervaiia organizatsiia Sibirskikh oblastnikov," from *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v Russkoi filosofskoi i obshchestvennoi mysli: K 150-letniu sibirskogo oblastnichestva* A.E. Zainutkinov, M.V. Ivanova, T.F. Liapkina, A.V. Malinov, and S.A. Troitskii, eds. (St. Petersburg: Izd-o dom Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2010), 117; Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 7; Dubrovskii, *Rozhdeniye v strane izgnaniia*, 246-247.

<sup>80</sup> Dubrovskii, *Rozhdeniye v strane izgnaniia*, 247.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

September 1861 he was held for a time in Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg. His studies thus interrupted, he opted to leave St. Petersburg, securing a position with the Russian Geographical Society and setting out for Siberia in order to serve as a naturalist and interpreter. In the autumn of 1862, therefore, Potanin left St. Petersburg for Omsk.<sup>82</sup> In 1863, Potanin planned to accompany the astronomer K.V. Struve on an expedition to China, but the group proved unable to leave the country; however, Potanin was able to go on an expedition with Struve later that spring.<sup>83</sup> At the conclusion of the expedition, Potanin returned to Tomsk and taught natural sciences in the gymnasium; by 1864, he had started working for the local government after taking a position as the secretary of the Statistical Committee in Tomsk. Many members of the Siberian circle, like Potanin, returned home after leaving the Imperial University in St. Petersburg, and they organized students, intellectuals, and other civic-minded people into like-minded circles throughout Siberia. Iadrintsev and Potanin had helped establish one such group Tomsk in 1864.<sup>84</sup> Potanin also used his time in Tomsk as an opportunity to study Siberian history, geography, and culture. He also began publicizing regionalist issues by publishing articles for a local newspaper—*Tomskie Gubernskie Vedomosti* (*Tomsk Provincial Gazette*).<sup>85</sup> Through the mid-1860s, Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev's life followed a path similar to that of Potanin's.

Born into a prosperous merchant family in Omsk on 18 October 1842 (O.S.), Iadrintsev, at the age of nine, moved with his family to Tomsk. Initially educated in a private boarding

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<sup>82</sup> Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, "Biografi G.N. Potanina," in *K biografii G.N. Potanina: Sbornik k 80-letiiu dnia rozhdeniia Grigoriia Nikolaevicha Potanina* Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, ed. (Tomsk: Sibirskoe Torchestvo Pechantnoe Dela, 1915), XXIV.

<sup>83</sup> Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 8.

<sup>84</sup> Dmitrienko, *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 164.

<sup>85</sup> Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 8-9; Dubrovskii, *Rozhdennye v strane izgnaniia*, 249.



school, he entered the Tomsk gymnasium in 1854.<sup>86</sup> Iadrintsev left the gymnasium in 1859 (before he could graduate) and started his studies the following year in St. Petersburg at a university described as pulsating with “conscious, seething life.”<sup>87</sup> An acquaintance had given Iadrintsev a letter of introduction to present to the ex-officer Potanin. This early meeting proved fortuitous, as the Siberian students in the capital were on the cusp of working together within a Siberian Circle, theorizing about how Russia’s Great Reforms could and should affect Siberia. Of his time in St. Petersburg, Iadrintsev said, “The idea of conscious service to the region, at a time when European Russia was awakening to the same idea, was the basis of our approach.”<sup>88</sup> Iadrintsev and Potanin produced several of the key tenets of the regionalist platform during their early meetings: the development of a Siberian university to halt the intellectual drain created by absentee Siberian students, the abolition of the exile system, greater economic independence for Siberia—shaking off their vision of Siberia’s secondary/colonial status within the empire—and the improvement of the plight of indigenous Siberian peoples. When student unrest interrupted his studies and forced the university to close its doors in 1861, Iadrintsev left St. Petersburg, taking the group’s ideas back to Siberia, where he began publishing newspaper articles pertaining to what he considered the burning questions of Siberia’s position within the Russian Empire and its needs for the future.<sup>89</sup>

Iadrintsev worked in various Siberian cities including Tomsk, and he was still in Tomsk when the Russian government, as part of the growing crackdown on Russia’s nascent intelligentsia that characterized the immediate post-emancipation period, arrested him along with Potanin and other members of the regionalist movement. By mid-1865, Russian authorities

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<sup>86</sup> Dubrovskii, *Rozhdeniye v strane izgnaniia*, 108.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 109; Sesiunina, *G.N. Potanin i N.M. Iadrintsev*, 25.

<sup>88</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Sbornik izbrannykh statei, stykhotvorenii i fel’etonov*, (Krasnoyarsk: Tipografiia Eniseiskogo Gub. Soiuza Kooperativov, 1919), 45.

<sup>89</sup> Dubrovskii, *Rozhdeniye v strane izgnaniia*, 110-111; Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 45.

feared that the “patriotic” articles published by Iadrintsev, Potanin, and other regionalists would foster uprisings against the Russian government. Members of the movement were arrested and charged as Siberian separatists.<sup>90</sup> The final decision declared Potanin the leader of a non-existent “conspiracy” to separate Siberia from Imperial Russia and sentenced him to five-years hard labor in Sveaborg, Finland, which was followed by exile to Volgodskaya province.<sup>91</sup> Iadrintsev was given ten years of penal servitude and he lost any property rights. He was eventually exiled to Archangel province.<sup>92</sup> Characteristic of the behavior of suppressed intellectuals of the Alexandrian age, Potanin made use of the time in exile to work with materials gathered from the local archives, producing *Materialy dlya istorii Sibiri* (*Materials for the History of Siberia*).<sup>93</sup> Similarly, Iadrintsev began publishing articles in local journals like *Delo* and *Nedelia*.<sup>94</sup>

After their return from exile, Potanin and Iadrintsev pursued separate intellectual interests. At the urging of P.P. Semenov-Tian-Shansky (the explorer who had initially encouraged Potanin to seek higher education in the capital), the Russian government lifted Potanin’s exile in 1874 and allowed him to return to St. Petersburg. There he prepared for the first in a series of scientific expedition to China, Tibet, Altai, and Mongolia.<sup>95</sup> These scientific expeditions brought Potanin widespread acclaim and resulted in the publication of several important works, most notably, *Ocherki severo-zapadnoi Mongolii* (*Essays on Northwestern Mongolia*). This would become Potanin’s most important work, combining ethnography, history, folklore, and natural science to focus on a broad study of Mongolia. Through his studies of Tibet,

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<sup>90</sup> Some of these articles dealt with reforming the Siberian Cossack Army (Potanin), the need for a Siberian university (Potanin and Iadrintsev), social life in Siberia (Iadrintsev), and the status of Siberia on 1 January 1865—the need for progressive laws, the development of the region, etc. (Iadrintsev).

<sup>91</sup> Dubrovskii, *Rozhdeniye v strane izgnaniia*, 249-251.

<sup>92</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir*, 61.

<sup>93</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 70-71.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-74.

<sup>95</sup> Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 10.

Mongolia, China, and the European Christian traditions, Potanin developed a theory that world culture represented a blending of European and Asian elements, and that these elements shared common roots in the east.

Potanin believed that such scientific and educational explorations could help change life in the non-European provinces of the Russian Empire. While he pursued his scientific investigations, Potanin engaged in social activities that included lobbying for the opening of a Siberian university and the development of public education in Siberia. Following his return from exile, however, Potanin's role in the regionalist movement had become secondary to that of Iadrintsev.

In 1868, after three years incarceration, Iadrintsev suffered exile to Archangel where he remained until 1874. After returning to Siberia, he worked in Omsk, ultimately producing a report on the necessity for a Siberian university. Iadrintsev also mounted an expedition to the Altai region, collecting information for a work that would win him the gold medal from the Russian Geographical Society: *Sibirskie inorodtsy: ikh byt i sovremennoe polozhenie* (*Siberian Natives: Their Way of Life and Current Situation*).<sup>96</sup> In this work, written to commemorate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ermak's conquest of Siberia, Iadrintsev took a broad-based approach to understanding the complexity of Siberia, an area that was becoming more complex by the day.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Sibirskie inorodtsy, ikh byt i sovremennoe polozhenie (etnograficheskii i statisticheskii izsledovaniia s prilozheniem statisticheskikh tablits)* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie I.M. Sibiriakova, 1891). Much like Iadrintsev's *Sibir' kak koloniia*, his *Sibirskie inorodtsy* went through several versions. After the initial citation, whenever a different version of the text is quoted, the publication date will be included in parentheses.

<sup>97</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia: Sovremennoe polozhenie Sibiri, ee nuzhdy i potrebnosti, ee proshloe i budushchee* (Tiumen': Izdatel'stvo Iu. Mandrika, 2000).

By the time of his death in 1894, Iadrintsev had become the voice of the movement, having published more than one hundred articles and books on regionalist issues.<sup>98</sup> He had also served as both editor and publisher of *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, a paper devoted to regionalist ideas. Iadrintsev's achievements, however, should not detract from Potanin's accomplishments as a regionalist theorist. Potanin constantly promoted regionalist ideas, and his efforts, not surprisingly, assumed increased importance following Iadrintsev's passing.

These condensed biographical sketches of Potanin and Iadrintsev's lives reveal the broad, general paths in their lives, which mirrored those of their compatriots within the regionalist movement. Working together to transform the Siberian *zemliachastvo* (fraternity) in the city from something akin to a mutual aid society, Potanin and Iadrintsev united people from various backgrounds and imbued them with a profound devotion to the pursuit of Siberian interests. The members of this Siberian circle in St. Petersburg—which included Iadrintsev, Potanin, Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov, Nikolai Ivanovich Naumov, Nikolai Semenovich Shchukin, Mikhail Vacel'evich Zagoskin, Fedor Nikolaevich Usov, A.P. Nesterov, A.D. Shchaitanov, Innokentii Vasil'evich Fedorov-Omulevskii, and others—did not hail from noble families. They were the sons of minor government officials, merchants, Cossack officers, and priests. Iadrintsev and Potanin, along with the twenty or thirty other students, held meetings in the library and theorized about how the Great Reforms could affect Siberia. They saw their immediate goals as rendering service to the region and developing their ideas.<sup>99</sup> They believed that developing of local goals and initiatives could ultimately foster change within Siberia, leading to increased regional autonomy and the spread of federalist views.

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<sup>98</sup> Additional information on works both by and about Iadrintsev, is found in Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik*, 145-189.

<sup>99</sup> Sesiunina, G.N. *Potanin i N.M. Iadrintsev*, 21-22.

While at the Imperial University in St. Petersburg, regionalists familiarized themselves with theories concerning the nature of the Russian state, and they utilized these theories to understand the relationship between Siberia and European Russia. In formulating these theories, an historian of the federalist school in Russia—Afansii Prokof'evich Shchapov—had a profound influence on the regionalist movement's ideological position. Thus, any examination of regionalist ideas, especially at the movement's inception, requires an analysis of Shchapov's theories.<sup>100</sup>

Born in 1830 in the village of Anga (near Irkutsk) to a Great Russian father and a Buriat peasant mother, Shchapov found elements of his ideological position shaped at an early age. Historian Dmitri von Mohrenschildt speculated that Shchapov's family on his father's side had been Great Russian schismatics, which arguably helped shape Shchapov's course of study later in life.<sup>101</sup> He attended the Irkutsk seminary and, upon graduating, continued his studies at the Kazan Divinity Academy, from which he graduated in 1856. His thesis on the schismatics earned high praise and was published after his graduation.<sup>102</sup> From the Divinity Academy, Shchapov moved on to the University of Kazan, where he taught Russian History and the history of the Orthodox Church. His lectures at the university show threads of regionalism that would become apparent throughout the movement's formation: a protest against centralization; the ethnographic, social, historical, and economic peculiarities of the various regions of the Russian state; Russia's secondary emphasis on Siberian development; and the conception of Russian's

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<sup>100</sup> Much of this analysis of Shchapov's ideas is condensed from Dimitri von Mohrenschildt's, "Shchapov: Exponent of Regionalism and the Federal School in Russian History," *Russian Review*, Volume 37, Number 4 (October 1978), pp. 387-404. Where possible, I have consulted the works of Shchapov to verify some elements of Mohrenschildt's article: G.A. Luchinskii, ed., *Sochineniia A.P. Shchapova v 3 tomakh* (St. Petersburg: Izdanie M.V. Pirozhkova, 1906-1908).

<sup>101</sup> von Mohrenschildt, "Shchapov: Exponent of Regionalism," 388.

<sup>102</sup> A.P. Shchapov, *Golos drevnei russkoi tserkvi ob uluchshenii byta nesvobodnykh liudei* (Kazan: Izdanie Knigoprodavtsa Ivana Dubrovina, 1859).

colonization of the outlying regions. Shchapov also developed the federal idea for Siberia, not based upon a national point of view *per se* but upon local and regional peculiarities, like climate and processes of colonization.

While Shchapov worked at the University of Kazan, peasant unrest, prompted by disappointment in the emancipation of 1861, erupted into a disturbance in the village Bezdna near Kazan. After the Tsarist Army forcibly suppressed this disturbance, students from the university organized a memorial service to the fallen peasants during which Shchapov gave the eulogy, lifting up the peasants as heroes. He found himself elevated to the status of hero as well, after closing his eulogy by declaring: “Long live a democratic constitution!”<sup>103</sup> Shchapov’s views made him a target of the tsarist regime, which brought him to St. Petersburg in order to question him more fully about the eulogy. Several of Shchapov’s Siberian students subsequently moved from Kazan to St. Petersburg where they associated with the Siberian circle organized by Potanin and Iadrintsev.<sup>104</sup>

While Shchapov was in St. Petersburg to clarify the comments he had made at the memorial service for the Bezdna peasants, he composed two letters to Tsar Alexander II, arguing for the decentralization of the Russian state, the revival of the *Zemsky Sobor* (Assembly of the Land), the establishment of regional councils, the distribution of local taxes for local needs, and any measures to improve the intellectual, economic, and moral life of Siberia. According to Shchapov, village communes represented nascent forms of local autonomy. To foster them, Shchapov believed that the government should allow citizens to develop schools in every village. This would guarantee that peasants received the education necessary to participate in local

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<sup>103</sup> G.A. Luchinskii, “Afanasii Prokof’evich Shchapov: Biograficheskii ocherk,” in *Socheneniia A.P. Shchapova* v 3 tomakh, Volume 3, (St. Petersburg: Izdanie M.V. Pirozhkova, 1908), XXXVI-XXXVIII; Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik*, 51-52.

<sup>104</sup> Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 29.

government. To Shchapov, peasants needed an education, especially since the local communes would ultimately make up something approaching a rural confederation. These letters garnered the interest of Tsar Alexander II, who made a notation that Shchapov should be watched closely.<sup>105</sup>

The government could keep a close watch on Shchapov in St. Petersburg because he would ultimately come to work for the government's Interior Ministry. Still, his politics remained suspect, and he continued working on the questions of local self-government and regionalism while in St. Petersburg, producing a subversive poem that probed the question of why Siberia had not awakened intellectually like other regions of the country.<sup>106</sup> Shchapov's "To Siberia" proclaimed that it was time for the provinces to stand up and overthrow centralization.<sup>107</sup> Subsequently, Shchapov's suspect political leanings and penchant for publishing subversive works led, in 1864, to his exile, first to Anga and then to Irkutsk. While exiled, Shchapov again took up the cause of education for provincial towns. For him, Irkutsk—an administrative capital in Russia's Far East—suffered from a dearth of educational and intellectual outlets. Unfortunately, his continuing work on ethnography, history, and natural science was cut short in 1865 when he was arrested and dispatched to Omsk to answer before a special commission convened to hear the matter of the Siberian separatists.

The various elements in Shchapov's vision for Siberia touched on several questions that found their way into the regionalists' ideological platform. However, while Shchapov conceived of Siberia as a colony of Russia, he saw some benefits to this phenomenon, as it brought

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<sup>105</sup> Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik*, 52; von Mohrenschildt, "Shchapov: Exponent of Regionalism," 393.

<sup>106</sup> Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik*, 52-53.

<sup>107</sup> Shchapov quoted in a letter from Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, January 1862, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, eds. N.A. Logachev and Iu.P. Kozlov (Irkutsk: Izdatel'stvo Irkutskogo universiteta, 1987), Volume 1, 59-60.

Christianity and civilization to the region.<sup>108</sup> The empire had been shaped by colonization, which in turn had been shaped by geography and ethnography. Regionalists believed that Siberia constituted a colony of Russia, and while they appreciated and adopted elements of Shchapov's geographic and ethnographic considerations, they drew the line at looking to Russia's colonization of Siberia as beneficial. For regionalists, Russia's colonization of the region trapped Siberia into secondary status. The ethnographic elements and geographic elements in Shchapov's work would prove key to understanding regionalists' conception of what constituted "Siberia" in their minds.

While some of Shchapov's later theories of ethnography would prove darker, his earlier ethnographic vision of the Russian Empire in general and of Siberia in particular stressed the importance of native groups. Shchapov contended that colonization proved beneficial because it provided for the mixture of Great Russians with indigenous groups.<sup>109</sup> When Shchapov analyzed the ethnographic composition of Siberians, he saw them as capable of assimilating elements of European Russians and using this remarkable adaptability to master the geography and climate of Siberia. While Shchapov described the Great Russians as colonizers of Siberia, he saw this colonization and intermingling of Great Russians and native groups as positive in that it allowed the best elements of both groups to come to the forefront. He believed that while the Russian Empire received its basic form from colonization, the nature of this colonization emerged through geographical features that affected all of the peoples in Siberia—colonizers and indigenous groups alike.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, Shchapov also concluded that "the study of the history of the Great Russian people or any people in the Russian Empire would be possible only through

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<sup>108</sup> von Mohrenschildt, "Shchapov: Exponent of Regionalism," 390.

<sup>109</sup> A.P. Shchapov, "Istoriko-etnograficheskaia organizatsiia russkogo narodonaseleniia," in *Sochineniia A.P. Shchapova*, Volume 2, G.A. Luchinskii, ed. (St. Petersburg: Izdanie M.V. Pirozhkova, 1907), 410.

<sup>110</sup> A.P. Shchapov, "Istoriko-geograficheskoe raspredelenie russkogo narodonaseleniia. Estestvennye usloviia zemledel'cheskikh poselenii v Rossii," in *Sochineniia A.P. Shchapova*, Volume 2, 272-273.



the study of the history of the many and varied non-Russian tribes who now inhabit the region ....”<sup>111</sup> The development of these non-Russian tribes was important for Shchapov’s understanding of Russia’s historical development in general. For Shchapov, Russian history was the history of various regions and the people within them. Since the Russian state was composed of diverse ethnicities, Shchapov’s history of the Russian state was really the history of these ethnicities and their interactions—both in terms of cooperation and conflict; therefore, any comprehensive understanding of Russian History had to be built in part upon an understanding of the indigenous groups of Siberia. Therefore, the protection of these interactions between Great Russians and *inorodtsy* necessitated the protection of the natives. Similarly, Shchapov placed tremendous emphasis on the role of peasants in Russian History, claiming that peasants constituted the essence of Russia and that everything tied into the lives of peasants. Accordingly, any student of either Russia’s history or future had to understand how peasants organized themselves in the face of increasing centralization.<sup>112</sup> After taking a multi-tiered ethnographic snapshot of Russia, Shchapov came to believe that the development of basic institutions such as a community council and eventually the *Zemsky Sobor* in Russia—and ultimately the proper emergence of self-government—required the free development of the people—all of the people. Essentially, Siberia was just another area of Russia, and it had to be allowed the same opportunities for development, including institutions of local self-government. Siberia had to have an opportunity to develop within its traditional regional framework. While Shchapov’s conception of Russia’s colonization of Siberia identified the benefits for Siberia, he also looked

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<sup>111</sup> Shchapov quoted in A.E. Zainutdinov, “A.P. Shchapov – Predtecha Sibirskogo oblastnichestva,” from A.E. Zainutdinov, et al., eds., *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v russkoi filosofskoi i obshchestvennoi mysli, K 150-letiiu sibirskogo oblastnichestva* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’skii Dom Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2010), 45-46.

<sup>112</sup> Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and Socialist Movements in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 197.

at another element that created a significant problem for Siberians in general: the lack of proper education in Siberia.<sup>113</sup>

As an intellectual descendent of the Irkutsk seminary, Shchapov believed that this administrative center in Russia's Far East needed a university that could serve as the foundation for an educated Siberian society. In "Estestvoznaniie i narodnaia ekonomiiia" ("Natural History and National Economy"), Shchapov bemoaned Siberia's status as the relative "backwoods" of the Russian Empire. "One who has not had the experience of what it means to be a writer in the provincial backwoods, cannot imagine it," Shchapov said. "Under such circumstances," he continued, "mental work is hard labor for those who feel a necessity for such work."<sup>114</sup> Shchapov believed that the uneducated environment of Russia's Far East stifled any potential for intellectual improvement. For Shchapov, the goal should be the elevation of the general intellectual environment by building a university in Irkutsk and improving education for Siberian peasants. Shchapov went so far as to write letters to Tsar Alexander II, which included a plea for education for the lower classes.<sup>115</sup> This represented another element that regionalists would add to their ideological program. While in Irkutsk Shchapov concluded that Siberian youths could not recognize either pressing social issues or the needs of their region. Also, they proved incapable of distinguishing "the most important of [these issues] from the petty." For the most part, Shchapov found these youths "characterized by extreme unconsciousness, indifference, and apathy regarding the higher requirements of social development."<sup>116</sup> Later, Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev's lamentations concerning education and the thorough indifference on the part of

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<sup>113</sup> A.P. Shchapov, "Istoriko-etnograficheskaia organizatsiia russkogo narodonaseleniia," 465.

<sup>114</sup> A.P. Shchapov, "Estestvoznaniie i narodnaia ekonomiiia," in *Sochineniia A.P. Shchapova*, Volume 2, 154.

<sup>115</sup> This letter, with a brief background sketch written by A. Sidirov, can be found in "Pis'mo A.P. Shchapova Aleksandru II v 1861 g." in *Krasnyi arkhiv: Istoricheskii zhurnal*, Volume 6, Number 19 (1926), pp. 150-165.

<sup>116</sup> Shchapov quoted in Zainutdinov, "A.P. Shchapov – Predtecha Sibirskogo oblastnichestva," 44-45.

Siberia's youths toward social development in the region would mirror those of Shchapov.<sup>117</sup>

This perspective held sway for regionalists through the turn of the twentieth century.

When the Russian government held hearings on the Siberian Separatist Affair in 1865, the importance of Shchapov's role in the construction of regionalist ideas could not be denied. Nikolai Semenovich Shchukin, one of the members of the Siberian circle from the capital, listed Shchapov as someone who inspired the regionalist movement, while the state had been informed (incorrectly, as it turned out) that Shchapov helped draft the proclamation "To Siberian Patriots." While the inquest commission questioned Shchapov, eventually exonerating and releasing him, Shchapov's influence on regionalism was undeniable.<sup>118</sup> Iadrintsev, no less, said that of all the influences in the regionalist circles in St. Petersburg—the lectures at the university, the meetings of various circles in the capital, the poetry of the movement—"the greatest influence was exercised by Shchapov's lectures," which according to Iadrintsev, brought the members of the Siberian circle to the idea of serving Siberia and returning to Siberia to carry out this idea.<sup>119</sup> In the late 1850s—prior to Iadrintsev's attending the university in St. Petersburg—N.S. Shchukin, a populist from the Dobroliubov Circle in St. Petersburg, talked with Iadrintsev about life outside of Russia and turned Iadrintsev's mind towards the debate over serfdom in Russia.<sup>120</sup> He told Iadrintsev about the influence of Shchapov's lectures on his socio-political views. Once Iadrintsev arrived in St. Petersburg, he saw how everyone wanted to hear university lectures, particularly Shchapov's lectures.<sup>121</sup> Ultimately, the ideas of federation mingled with regionalist tendencies to put the Russian government on the alert for a subversive organization dedicated to

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<sup>117</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 157; *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 31.

<sup>118</sup> N.Ia. Aristov, *Afanasii Prokof'evich Shchapov: Zhizn' i sochineniia* (St. Petersburg: Tip. A.S. Suvorina, 1883), 115.

<sup>119</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 42, 44.

<sup>120</sup> B.B. Glinskii, "N.M. Iadrintsev," *Istoricheskii vestnik* Volume LVII, Number 8 (August 1894), 418.

<sup>121</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (28 June 1884).

achieving Siberian independence. Clearly, Shchapov's vision exerted significant influence on the ideology of the regionalist movement, and while not technically a member of the regionalist circle in St. Petersburg, his vision for Siberia was interwoven tightly with regionalism.

Shchapov's contributions to regionalism ran so deep that historian V.G. Mirzoev argued that the regionalists borrowed all of their basic ideas from Shchapov's theories.<sup>122</sup> Shchapov's democratic vision for Russia built around a concept of "the people"; the idea that Siberia, a land rooted in exile and exploitation, still slumbered while the rest of the nation flourished; the proclamation that the provinces should overthrow centralization; and the conception of a Siberia built upon an ethnographic and geographic foundation offered much for regionalists to latch onto ideologically. Whether or not regionalists took Shchapov's apparent call for rebellion to heart—either in the eulogy for the Bezdna peasants or in the poem "To Siberia"—they circulated these ideas among themselves. Potanin, upon sending a copy of poem to N.S. Shchukin told him that such ideas were important for the region, and he urged him to try and get the information published in newspapers and journals in Siberia, saying that he would try and do the same.<sup>123</sup> Laying a foundation for understanding regionalism by way of Shchapov's ideas offers a level of cohesion that becomes obvious only in retrospect.

Explorations of regionalism and the philosophy of its followers must grapple with chronological discrepancies. While the chief ideological works of the movement date to the 1880s, 1890s, and the early 1900s, regionalists fashioned the bulk of their ideas in the Petersburg circle in the early 1860s. Grounding these ideas in Shchapov's philosophy can reveal more unity in the overall ideological structure of regionalism. In producing several key works in the 1880s,

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<sup>122</sup> Information on Mirzoev from Zainutdinov, "A.P. Shchapov – Predtecha Sibirskogo oblastnichestva," 41-42.

<sup>123</sup> Shchapov quoted in a letter from Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, January 1862, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 61-62.

1890s, and 1900s, Iadrintsev and Potanin's ideas flowed from Shchapov's federalist vision. An examination of these works confirms how the regionalists utilized Shchapov's vision to construct a broader philosophy they hoped would appeal to Siberians.

Regionalists' federalist vision for the empire descended from Shchapov's lectures. While Shchapov was a federalist, he also recognized the importance of a unified Russian state; however, federalists like Shchapov believed that understanding the nature of the various regions of Russia was vital to appreciating the inherent values of these regions relative to the Russian Empire and its history.<sup>124</sup> This became important to a regionalist vision of Siberia. Also, regionalists added to Shchapov's theories concerning the potential for Siberian independence. While this was never really *the* main concept of regionalism, it received further exploration in a governmental investigation in 1865. Regionalists borrowed Shchapov's understanding of problems in the region, but examining the difference between Shchapov's conception of Siberia's status as part of the Russian Empire and regionalists' understanding of Siberia's peculiarities shines a light on how some regionalists could think of the region as an area that could stand alone outside of the empire.

While regionalists favored Shchapov's federalism in terms of its cultural appreciation of regional minority groups and regional self-government, Iadrintsev went beyond Shchapov's analysis of Siberia within the empire, asserting that the climatic conditions of the region dramatically increased the region's isolation, allowing the region to develop along a path markedly different from that followed by European Russia. Regionalists also believed that the overall political and intellectual development of the peoples of Siberia had been significantly retarded by this isolation. A group of elite members within Siberian society needed to awaken the political consciousness of the region. Therefore, with the elite as a prerequisite for

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<sup>124</sup> Zainutdinov, "A.P. Shchapov – Predtecha Sibirskogo oblastnichestva," 45.

developing Siberian political consciousness, the idea of educating the people emerged as the logical antecedent for regional progress.<sup>125</sup> According to both Shchapov and the regionalists, the main obstacle to constructing this political consciousness was that anyone who wanted to pursue higher education was forced out of Siberia, while those remained behind did not fully understand the pressing social concerns of the region. Thus, to develop political consciousness in Siberia, the region needed to a university. A Siberian university would provide for proper education for Siberians, and they would no longer have to leave the region. The intellectual hemorrhaging thus staunchened, the region could overcome the “extreme unconsciousness, indifference and, apathy” towards social development among Siberians.<sup>126</sup> As mentioned earlier, Shchapov came to understand this problem while experiencing another regionalist problem firsthand—exile.

Acquainted with the exile system through his father—there are theories that his father’s family had been exiled to Siberia for being Old Believers—and through first-hand experience, Shchapov added an ethnographer’s viewpoint to an examination of the exile system. He believed that the mingling of colonizers and indigenous groups into a Siberian-Russian people created something distinctly different from the traditional European Russians, and that difference proved beneficial for Siberians. However, the political and religious exiles that the government administratively exiled to Siberia created problems for the region that far outweighed any supposed benefits. Shchapov adopted the position that the Siberian-Russian population could be considered raw, but they were also bold and enterprising. Unfortunately, the presence of significant numbers of criminal exiles risked the corruption of these people.<sup>127</sup> Analyzing the

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>126</sup> A.P. Shchapov quoted in Zainutdinov, “A.P. Shchapov – Predtecha Sibirskogo oblastnichestva,” 44-45.

<sup>127</sup> A.A. Ivanov, “‘Samyi nasushchnyi vopros Sibiri,’” from A.E. Zainutdinov, M.V. Ivanova, T.F. Liapkina, et al., eds., *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v russkoi filosofskoi i obshchestvennoi mysli*, K 150-

situation from an ethnographer's perspective, Shchapov believed that a lively experiment was unfolding in Siberia. The process of colonization brought constant collision, assimilation, and adaption that created of distinctively Siberian people. Adding exiles to the region only created problems for Siberia, retarding what Shchapov considered the free and organic development of the region. Regionalists both adopted and adapted Shchapov's theories as needed, adding elements as it suited their purposes and goals. However, regionalists found Siberia transforming under their feet, and they had to work to grapple with these rapidly changing conditions. For regionalists, the Russian government's system of exile represented a roadblock for the development of Siberia. Regionalists believed the exile system was part of a two-pronged problem for Siberia. While the exile system brought exiles and convicts to Siberia—people who would ultimately become workers—other types of migration—like agricultural migration—were severely restricted. For Iadrintsev these limitations reinforced the region's secondary status within the Russian Empire, and this was a glaring problem for regionalists.<sup>128</sup> This inferior position within the empire meant that any transformations taking place within the empire would never find their way to Siberia. Even though Siberia became more important to the government throughout the 1800s, that increased importance did not translate into the Siberian development that regionalists desired.

In the early nineteenth century, Siberia represented a relative backwater of the Russian Empire, but on the heels of the transformation of the empire, Siberia became more integrated into the life of the empire itself. Many elements drove the transformation of Siberia in the second

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*letiiu sibirskogo oblastnchestva* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'skii Dom Sankt-Peterburgskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2010), 62-63.

<sup>128</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Sibir' pered sudom russkoi literatury," *Tomskie gubernskie vedomosti* № 9 (5 March 1865), 5.

half of the nineteenth century. For instance, the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad brought Siberia into the economic, political, and cultural life of the empire in a profound way.

The population of the region also increased dramatically, as the new railroad finally brought agricultural settlers and a new working class to the region. Population expansion fed into the economic and cultural growth of the region. Some 1.2 million settlers from European Russia relocated to Siberia between 1886 and 1900. Additionally, the Stolypin land reforms in conjunction with government-sponsored resettlement brought almost twice that number in the early twentieth century.<sup>129</sup> For the most part, however, the overall structure of the society remained unchanged, excepting subtle localized changes. Peasants remained a majority of the population, though the peasant population fragmented into the older, more established families (*starozhily*) and the newcomers (*novosely*). This fragmentation was reinforced by a difference in the standard of living between the older families who had claimed the best lands and the newest settlers had to farm whatever lands were left. Other changes in the socio-economic structure of the region followed the railroad into Siberia.<sup>130</sup>

For example, traditional craftsmen suffered technological unemployment as the transformation of the Russian economy and the coming of the Trans-Siberian Railroad brought the emergence of a small, but relatively active Siberian working class—some 700,000 workers by the revolution of 1917. These workers enjoyed a higher standard of living than elsewhere in Russia—workers on the Trans-Siberian Railroad received about forty-five rubles per month compared to the twenty rubles per month paid railroad workers in European Russia. Not surprisingly, their working and living conditions were substantially harsher than those

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<sup>129</sup> Leonid M. Goryushkin, “Migration, settlement and the rural economy of Siberia, 1861-1914,” Translated by Alan Wood, in Alan Wood, ed., *The History of Siberia: From Russian Conquest to Revolution* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 141.

<sup>130</sup> James Forsyth, *A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, Reprint 2000), 185-186.



experienced by railroad workers in European Russia. Smaller foundries, some large-scale factories, and coal mines cropped up along the path of the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Consequently, towns along the Trans-Siberian Railroad experienced rapid growth, while traditionally larger towns bypassed by the railroad—towns like Tomsk, Tobolsk, and others—saw their economic importance decrease dramatically.<sup>131</sup>

Siberia still represented the rural outskirts of Russia's industrial development. Cities contained only about thirteen percent of the region's population, and even in cities like Tomsk and Tobolsk, small handicrafts still prevailed.<sup>132</sup> When the Tomsk Council of Workers' Deputies emerged in early 1917, most of the city's industries were small craft institutions, and large industrial enterprises—enterprises with more than 1000 employees—did not exist. Even in Siberia proper, most of entrepreneurs (seventy-five percent of them) had yearly profits of less than 1000 rubles.<sup>133</sup> The coming of the railroad had mixed results. On one hand it fostered the development of local manufacturing enterprises; yet, on the other, it discouraged industrial development in the region by bringing in manufactured goods from European Russia.

As these areas of western Siberia waxed and waned in importance, transformations occurred throughout the region, as some of the governmental structure of Siberia had to be reworked. For example, the region had been divided into western and eastern territorial administrations in the 1820s, but the West Siberian Governor General's office closed in 1882, which meant that areas like Tomsk and Tobolsk found themselves administered directly from St. Petersburg. The Russian government restructured various offices in Siberia—the East Siberian Governor Generalship, the Priamurie Governor Generalship, among others—during the late

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<sup>131</sup> Goryushkin, "Migration, settlement and the rural economy of Siberia," 152-153.

<sup>132</sup> Mikhail V. Shilovskii, *Politicheskie protsessy v Sibiri v period sotsial'nykh kataklizmov, 1917-1920* gg. (Novosibirsk: "Sibirskii khronograf," 2003), 419.

<sup>133</sup> N.I. Sazonova and D.M. Matveev, *Istoriia Tomska* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo universiteta, 2010), 203.

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These developments fed off one another, and Siberia, by the onset of the First World War, had become overwhelmingly inhabited by Russians.<sup>134</sup> The economic, political, and demographic transformation of Siberia would come to contribute to the further evolution of regionalist theory in the late 1800s, but at regionalism's inception in the early 1860s, such changes were merely in their embryonic stages. Although in their initial stages, these changes would prove vital to the movement, as regionalists found themselves forced to confront these issues. As the evolution of Siberia took place, regionalists theorized on Siberia's position within the empire and debated its future. Shchapov had urged progress for the region, and while development was coming to Siberia, it had begun to tie the region to European Russia. Regionalists would subsequently take Shchapov's theories and utilize them to form the framework that would explain the dual nature of Siberia's backwardness within the Russian Empire, claiming that while Siberia saw increasing development, the deliberate rather than revolutionary pace of that transformation guaranteed Siberia's relative underdevelopment compared to European Russia. This speaks to the evolution of a regionalist ideology.

When regionalists held their first meetings in St. Petersburg, they had no clear ideological focus; however, after familiarizing themselves with Shchapov's theories and discussing the important issues of both Russia and Siberia in the early 1860s, regionalist ideology came to center on key regional issues. Regionalists built the philosophical underpinning of their movement on their perception of Siberia as a colony of the Russian Empire, their beliefs on what could be done to change that status, and their desires for the future of the region. As regionalists met in the apartments of various members, they laid this foundation for a regionalist platform that they believed could transform Siberia. They continued adding key elements to this platform—elements that would follow the regionalist movement throughout its existence. Vital

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<sup>134</sup> Goryushkin, "Migration, settlement and the rural economy of Siberia," 155.

points in regionalist ideology included creating a Siberian university, abolishing the exile system, gaining greater economic independence from European Russia, and improving the status of indigenous Siberian groups.<sup>135</sup> These discussions proved vital to the movement and its members. Speaking of the years in the university at St. Petersburg, Potanin, later in life, would say, “These three years, that I spent with Iadrintsev, were perhaps the most important in our lives; these were the years of our political education ... Our political identity was determined during this period, and it was a particularly special place in the community’s activities.”<sup>136</sup> As the movement’s ideas took shape, regionalists sought ways to promote them.

In the course of these early years in St. Petersburg, members of the movement not only strove towards formulating their philosophy, they read key journals of the day. In his memoirs, Potanin said that in studying the literature, regionalists tried to prepare themselves for future activities. According to Potanin, the ideology of regionalism was “only in its infancy,” but in an effort to popularize their ideas, members of this Siberian circle sought appropriate journalistic outlets.<sup>137</sup> Nikolai Semenovich Shchukin—a Siberian transplant to the capital and someone with whom Potanin developed close professional ties—and Potanin worked through various journals and newspapers in an effort to shine a light on Siberia’s problems as they understood them.

It should be emphasized that members of St. Petersburg’s Siberian circle did more than theorize about the problems of their home region. They sought out active measures with which to accomplish their goals. One contemporary member wrote: “All students were Siberians, as I knew them, and they were people of very gifted and distinguished character—bold and direct ... Siberian students half-jokingly, half-seriously called Siberia the Russian America and said that

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<sup>135</sup> Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 29, 33-34.

<sup>136</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Vospominaniia: Koloniia i metropoliia,” *Sibirskaia zhizn’*, № 109, (19 May 1913), 3.

<sup>137</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Vospominaniia: Koloniia i metropoliia,” *Sibirskaia zhizn’*, № 114, (26 May 1913), 2.

sooner or later it will separate from Russia. These thoughts were expressed, of course, in passing and they did not develop.”<sup>138</sup> However, when it came to the Great Reforms and their effect on state and society, as members of the intelligentsia the members of the group considered them from a liberal-democratic standpoint, seeing the benefits of the reforms and desiring that they be applied to Siberia. In this respect, regionalists were sorely disappointed. In letters to Shchukin in January 1862, Potanin wrote: “Neither the government nor the society went down the road [of reform]; the government grows and society sleeps.”<sup>139</sup> Potanin may have wanted revolutionary action because he told Shchukin in another letter later that same year: “How I would like to act, but I feel that it is still early, that we don’t yet have the strength or the manpower.”<sup>140</sup> As far as the revolutionary tendencies of the movement, the Soviet historian Semen Fedorovich Koval’ argued that members of the regionalist movement tended towards a liberal bourgeois mentality as opposed to revolutionary-democracy, but this movement could be considered “a serious potential reserve for the all-Russian revolutionary-democratic movement.”<sup>141</sup> More recently, historian M.V. Shilovskii, the author of several monographs on regionalism and political movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has noted that several members of the group, including Potanin, had associations with Chernyshevsky, members of the Petrashevskii circle, and members of *Zemlia i volia* (Land and Liberty).<sup>142</sup> As for direct action, some members actively participated in the student uprisings of 1861 in St. Petersburg. Potanin’s name, along with the names of other circle members, is found on a list of people either arrested

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<sup>138</sup> Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 29.

<sup>139</sup> Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, January 1862, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 59.

<sup>140</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina v 4 tomakh*, Volume 1, (Irkutsk: Vostochno-Sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1977), 27.

<sup>141</sup> Koval', “Kharakter obshchestvennogo dvizheniia 60-kh godov XIX v. v Sibiri,” 38-39.

<sup>142</sup> Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 35.

or detained compiled by the government in conjunction with the 1861 disturbances.<sup>143</sup> Writing to other members of the regionalist group from Peter and Paul Fortress, Potanin relayed some information about the disturbances that took place, reminding his audience that the government had arrested almost three hundred people, holding them in Peter and Paul Fortress and the Kronstadt Fortress.<sup>144</sup> The closing of the university in the wake of the student unrest provided regionalists an opportunity to spread their vision about Siberia's needs.

During their time in the Siberian circle in St. Petersburg, the members of the group shared key ideas. For example, Potanin identified the regionalist argument in succinct fashion in a letter to Shchukin in early 1862: "We want to live and grow on our own, to have our own rights and laws, to read and to write what we want rather than what is ordered from Russia, to raise children as we wish, to collect taxes in our own way and to spend it only on ourselves."<sup>145</sup> The vital task left before regionalists at the conclusion of the 1861 student unrest was the promotion of regionalist ideas among the broader public. Shchukin and Potanin believed that publishing information in newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and books would be the best way to promote regionalist ideas. Regionalists had printed some of their ideas in regional newspapers in Tobolsk and Omsk prior to the 1861 disturbances. Indeed, Potanin had produced an article for *Kolokol* about Siberia in 1860; however, there had been no real position statement from the regionalists about their goals and desires.<sup>146</sup> That soon changed.

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<sup>143</sup> Potanin was actually put in Peter and Paul Fortress on charges of extreme insolence against the police, exciting crowd disobedience, and inciting a riot. Mikhail V. Shilovskii, *Sibirskie oblastniki v obshchestvenno-politicheskom dvizhenii v kontse 50-kh—60-kh godakh XIX veka* (Novosibirsk, 1989), 75-76; Dubrovskii, *Rozhdennye v strane izgnaniia*, 247.

<sup>144</sup> Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, N.M. Pavlinov, and I.V. Fedorov, 28 November 1861, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 55.

<sup>145</sup> Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, January 1862, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 59.

<sup>146</sup> Potanin produced several works in newspapers and journals, including the Journal of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society and *Kolokol*. For complete bibliographic information on these early works,

After the temporary closing of the university in St. Petersburg, members of the movement trickled back to Siberia—Potanin, Shchukin, Fedor Usov, Iadrintsev, and many others; soon almost all of the members of the Siberian circle moved to the east.<sup>147</sup> After leaving St. Petersburg, Potanin commenced his career as an explorer under the guiding hand of P.P. Semenov-Tian-Shansky, who had urged Potanin to leave Siberia to study in St. Petersburg. Iadrintsev, having made the decision to dedicate his life to Siberia and its development, left St. Petersburg following the closure of the university and returned to Tomsk.<sup>148</sup> Early in their relationship, Potanin had shaped Iadrintsev's decision to become a publicist. Later, after he had established his own newspaper—*Vostochnoe obozrenie*—Iadrintsev praised the close association with Potanin: "He was my first mentor and teacher. I wholeheartedly accepted his patriotic ideas. He determined my vocation."<sup>149</sup> Later in life, Potanin would say, "At first, things with Iadrintsev went smoothly, and we marched at the same tempo. Perhaps I, the more experienced and senior in terms of years, was slightly ahead. In his memoirs, he called me his teacher, but life soon separated us, I began my explorations, and the full burden of Siberian journalism fell exclusively on his shoulders."<sup>150</sup> The burden would be rather heavy.

According to Iadrintsev, "We considered the human word to be the best means for winning the battle against ignorance, for the creative ideas and for the procurement of human rights."<sup>151</sup> Accordingly, Iadrintsev and other regionalists published newspaper articles on Siberia's position in the Russian Empire and its needs for the future. Even though the closing of the university sent many of the regionalists in various directions throughout Siberia, wherever

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consult Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravocnik*, 106; Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "K kharakteristike Sibiri," *Kolokol* (London) № 131 (1 June 1860), 604-606.

<sup>147</sup> Potanin, "Vospominaniia: Koloniia i metropoliia," *Sibirskaia zhizn'*, № 114, (26 May 1913), 2.

<sup>148</sup> V.I. Semevskii, "Neskol'ko slov v pamiat' N.M. Iadrintseva," *Russkaia mysl'* Vol. 16, No. 1 (1895), 30.

<sup>149</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 28 June 1884.

<sup>150</sup> Potanin, "Vospominaniia: Koloniia i metropoliia," *Sibirskaia zhizn'*, № 109, (19 May 1913), 3.

<sup>151</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 153.

they ventured they carried the ideas of regionalism with them, and the central idea of regionalism became a Siberian university.

Regionalists left Siberia in order to receive an education, but so many students who left the region for European Russia never returned. A Siberian university, therefore, became another means of combating ignorance. Securing a university would keep a youthful intelligentsia in the region, and in keeping with regionalist ideals, Iadrintsev gave a rousing speech in favor of a Siberian university in 1864. This speech led to the creation of a fund to help aid in the construction of just such a university.<sup>152</sup> This speech epitomized a growing awareness among regionalists that they had significant work to do in order to clarify and to communicate their beliefs and goals for the region. By 1864, many regionalists had been in Siberia clarifying and popularizing their philosophy for the better part of three years, and they had made tremendous strides during that period.

Several members of the Siberian circle who left the university took the opportunity to launch their careers in Siberia, producing first real statements of purpose for the regionalist movement in the first months of 1863. Specifically, they produced two key proclamations: “To Siberian Patriots” and “To the Patriots of Siberia” (the first one written by S.S. Popov, the second one written and edited by Iadrintsev and Shashkov while they were still in St. Petersburg). These proclamations set the tone for regionalism, establishing, in programmatic form, a regionalist vision of Siberia and the methods considered necessary to transform the region from a colony into a proper region on an equal footing with the rest of the empire. These proclamations decried the way that the Russian government treated Siberia as a mere colony. Regionalists argued that Siberia’s perpetual secondary status manifested itself in the exploitation

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<sup>152</sup> Semevskii, “Neskol’ko slov v pamiat’ N.M. Iadrintseva,” 31; Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 51-55.

of the region's resources, the barriers to Siberia's economic development, the destructive nature of the exile system, the crisis of the Siberian natives, the abuse perpetrated by "local officials," and the intellectual retardation caused by the lack of a Siberian university. The methodical fashion in which the authors laid bare the Russian system of oppression vis-à-vis Siberia revealed, they hoped, the logic behind the increased development of the region. One author even hinted at the potential for the region's independence. Both of these documents, as historian Mikhail Shilovskii correctly noted, represented propaganda tools that regionalists hoped would unite the various elements of the Siberian population behind regionalist ideas.<sup>153</sup> Not surprisingly, the exacting nature of the language made the proclamations sound extraordinarily revolutionary to the Russian government.

In the proclamation "To the Patriots of Siberia," Iadrintsev and Shashkov illuminated how the Russian government lorded authority over the region, assuming that all right-thinking and honest people in Russia recognized, so the proclamation began, "the failure of the Russian government to manage its subject peoples." "Day by day," Iadrintsev and Shashkov argued, "the hatred and resentment towards imperialism grows." In the course of conquering and subjugating the region, the governors sent from European Russia "plundered and robbed, tortured, hanged and killed our people ... The whole history of Siberia is marked by terrible violence and villainy from the tsarist bureaucracy." "The harshness of the reforms does not allow the people to take care of their needs through elected officials," Iadrintsev and Shashkov declared. Moreover, the tsarist regime "flood[ed] the country with exiled criminals, corrupting the indigenous population." The proclamation went on, "Siberia, less than anyone should hope for the reforms of the Russian government ... Its officials will always abuse power ... Siberia's interests will never coincide with the interests of Russia ...." "To the Patriots of Siberia" closed with a call for

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<sup>153</sup> Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 39.



Siberian independence: “All of these require the independence of Siberia, and it should secede from Russia for the good of its people, to create their own state on the basis of a national government. The democratic structure of its society particularly favors Siberia’s creation of a republic consisting of states like America.”<sup>154</sup> This proclamation and the one addressed “To Siberian Patriots” revealed the widespread discontent, disaffection, and dissatisfaction that regionalists had come to harbor towards the tsarist regime.

The proclamation “To Siberian Patriots” mirrored and elaborated upon the appeal found in “To the Patriots of Siberia.” Popov started in a similar vein, calling out the government in St. Petersburg for its inability to manage the region. “What,” Popov asked, “has the [Russian] government done for Siberia and for the education of its people—for the development of its natural riches untold? Worse than nothing! For three centuries it only beats and robs, robs and beats Siberia!” The government robbed Siberia through taxes, through the introduction of monopolies, and through extracting the mineral wealth of the region. In terms of the intellectual development of the region, St. Petersburg has proved that, in spite of the clear need for a university, the government “like all tyrannical [governments], is afraid of the light of science and knowledge,” preferring instead to draw everything and everyone good to the center. “Such a government—one so hostile to us,” Popov concluded, “is unworthy to rule over us. It is not our father. It is an executioner and bloodsucker!” Both proclamations closed by advocating Siberian independence. In the proclamation “To Siberian Patriots,” Popov admitted, “Siberia may be an economically independent country; it cannot be doubted. However, it lacks the mills and

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<sup>154</sup> I have opted not to include references to the individual quotations, as the text of this proclamation is relatively short. The full text can be found in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 92-95.

factories, but they will come with the overthrow of the Russian government ... The remoteness of Siberia and its geographical position clearly indicate the need for its independence.”<sup>155</sup>

These proclamations represented a condensation of regionalist ideas that had circulated since regionalists began discussing the needs of Siberia while studying in St. Petersburg. Perhaps regionalists hoped that they would never have to rely upon independence to fulfill the region’s potential—that would be a last resort; however, they understood that the government’s record on developing the region had proven less than satisfactory. Outside of independence, reform and development for Siberia depended on the will of the tsar.

Siberia’s colonial status within the empire proved key to the regionalists’ platform. Regionalists saw Siberia’s colonial experience as a combination of several different factors that hindered its proper development. Ermak Timofeyevich Alenin’s conquest of Siberia had brought it into the Russian Empire, but regionalists argued, for three hundred years, Siberian interests had remained of secondary consideration to the empire. The retardation of regional development in multiple areas revealed as much. Stagnant economic development, unprotected native groups, inadequate education, shoddy local government, and a cancerous exile system all proved that Siberia remained merely a colony. Economically, European Russia would not allow Siberia to develop local industry. Shchapov drew comparisons to European Russia, which, given the nature of Siberia’s backwardness as he saw it, was an unfavorable comparison. In order for Siberia to realize its true potential, the society, the economy, and the culture had to be elevated to the level of European Russia, which meant providing Siberia with the same benefits as the European regions of the Russian Empire.<sup>156</sup> Regionalist leaders looked at the policies that reinforced this

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<sup>155</sup> The full text of this proclamation can be found in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 123-130.

<sup>156</sup> Valentin Rasputin, “How Did They End Up in Irkutsk,” from *Siberia on Fire: Stories and Essays by Valentin Rasputin*, translated and edited by Gerald Mikkelson and Margaret Winchell (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 180-183.

secondary status for the region and sought new rules and regulations to aid Siberia's development.

Iadrintsev looked at government policies and saw how they favored European Russia's manufacturing at the expense of the development of Siberian industry. The exile system further contributed to this crisis, as exiles and convicts came to the region, ultimately becoming workers. On top of the problems created by the exile system, the government restricted other types of migration—particularly agricultural migration. For Iadrintsev these limitations aimed to keep Siberia in a perpetually inferior position.<sup>157</sup> Potanin believed that the government had hindered opportunities for the local population and that the regionalist goal should be equal opportunity so that trade and manufacturing could finally be established in the region. Potanin did, however, worry that agricultural migration could result in a situation where a new group of landlords could possibly dominate Siberia. Thus, taking care to nurture the peasants already in Siberia should take precedence over bringing additional peasants (and potentially landlords) from European Russia.<sup>158</sup> While regionalists like Potanin and Iadrintsev had theorized on the causes of Siberia's backwardness, the economic barriers to Siberia's development represented only one aspect of Siberia's secondary status within the Russian Empire. For regionalists, the exile system remained a sore boil on the body of Siberia.

In early regionalist writings, the exile system represented a most significant element contributing to Siberia's backwardness. The declarations to Siberian patriots had touched upon its destructive impact, but as historian M.G. Sesunina has pointed out, many of the earliest writings by Iadrintsev and Potanin were fairly quiet on the subject, if for no other reason than there existed little in the way of statistical information or specialized literature on the exile

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<sup>157</sup> Iadrintsev, "Sibir' pered sudom russkoi literatury," 5.

<sup>158</sup> Sesunina, *G.N. Potanin i N.M. Iadrintsev*, 79.

system.<sup>159</sup> For Potanin, focusing on the exile system offered a means of stoking the regionalist potential (even separatist potential, perhaps) of Siberia. In Iadrintsev's "Chto stoila Sibiri ssylka?" ("What is the Cost of Siberian Exile?") and *Sibir' kak koloniia*, the regionalist argument against the exile system reached its full flower, but those works came after statistical research had been carried out on the exile system's consequences for the region. Regionalist works on exile reflected their vision of the region as a colony of European Russia.

Potanin in particular argued that the Russian government aspired to colonize Siberia by way of exiled criminals. Petty criminals, shiftless and lewd persons, and people who evaded their tax obligation to the state were shuffled to Siberia. Potanin asserted that had the government really interested in developing the region, it would have sent artisans, craftsmen, and other skilled laborers to Siberia.<sup>160</sup> Regionalist works focusing on the exile system prior to the 1870s are fairly thin, as the statistical information had yet to be compiled. As events turned out, regionalists ultimately, during the 1870s, contributed to a greater understanding of exile and its effects on Siberia.

Potanin contended that an appreciation of the system of exile and its ramifications was vital to understanding the other underlying problems of the region, and he followed Shchapov's line of reasoning that the exile system corrupted the people. Potanin, as did Iadrintsev, argued that the system of exile and labor constituted a manifestation of the center's colonial vision for the territory east of the Urals.<sup>161</sup> Interestingly, Siberians, not merely regionalists, built the first real rallying point for protest against the center on the foundation of criminal exile, but regionalists advocated the scientific study of exile and its effects on the region. Iadrintsev's *Sibir' kak koloniia* addressed the problems of the prison system and exile. Iadrintsev also spent

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>160</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 222.

<sup>161</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 275.

several years collecting material in an effort to catalog the detrimental effects that exile and hard labor had on the region. For Iadrintsev, exile reflected the systematic setbacks, suffering, and uneven development in the history of Siberia. Much like Potanin, Iadrintsev understood the exile system as a key aspect of the government's forced colonization of the region—Siberia as a dumping ground where Russia's government could send both the dregs of its European existence and members of the political opposition.<sup>162</sup> While regionalists decried the effects of exile, the regionalist assessment of those individuals exiled to Siberia proved mixed.

Politically speaking, regionalists understood that, writ large, the socio-political life of Siberia enjoyed some benefits from having exiles in the region. Some of these outsiders—political exiles such as Poles and Lithuanians, for example—fostered diversity and culture in the region. Moreover, Polish exiles helped shape and drive the regionalist discussion of autonomy and integration in the Russian Empire. However, some regionalists contended that political exiles had a negative influence on the peasant community. Shchapov, for example, assumed that the various peoples of Siberia had developed in a natural way and that throwing exiles into the mix hindered this natural, organic development. Other regionalists built upon Shchapov's analysis, arguing that peasant communes represented the bedrock of Siberia's future, and that the glut of exiles could potentially have a negative influence on the population and warp the moral principles of Siberia's peasants. Iadrintsev succinctly presented the mixed regionalist opinion of

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<sup>162</sup> Unpacking Iadrintsev's vision of the exile system could prove exhaustive in and of itself. The core of the argument in this section was summarized from Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Ssylka v Sibir' i polozhenie ssyl'nykh," in *Sibir' kak koloniia: Sovremennoe polozhenie Sibiri. Ee Nuzhdy i potrebnosti. Ee proshloe i budushchee* (Tiumen: Izdatel'stvo Iu. Mandriki, 2000), 171-227. There are other sources from Iadrintsev that would prove worthwhile to this topic. For example, Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Statisticheskie materialy k istorii ssylki v Sibir," from *Zapiski Russkogo geograficheskogo obshchestva po otdeleniiu statistiki* (1898) Vol. VI, pp. 311-395. Also, *Russkaia obshchina v tiur'me i ssylke*. These are just a couple of examples of Iadrintsev's key works on the effects of exile and hard labor. It is important to remember that most of these works were produced *after* the period in question and represent an evolution of regionalist ideas.

exile in 1872: “Of course, enlightened people trapped in exile in Siberia for political reasons had an impact ..., and many individuals owe their development to them. But what society would be willing to purchase education at the cost of another’s misfortune. Therefore, ... it must be concluded that exile brought Siberia negligible benefit in mental development.”<sup>163</sup> Regionalists augmented their examination of exile by delving into the problems of Siberia’s indigenous population, placing particular emphasis on the Russian government’s treatment of the *inorodtsy*. Ultimately, regionalists created a vision of Siberian society that would incorporate native populations into a broadly defined socio-political conception of the region. As a federalist historian who viewed the people as the driving force of Russia’s history, Shchapov believed the *inorodtsy* to be vital for the history of Russia; regionalists added their scholarly curiosity about ethnography to an understanding of the *inorodtsy* and their role in the history and development of Siberia.

Seeking to challenge traditional understandings of the various levels of interaction between Great Russian, Turkic-Mongolian, Finno-Ugric, and Paleo-Asiatic groups, regionalists proffered a solution to the native question that centered on the concept of equality. While the colonization of Siberia and concomitant interaction between Great Russians and indigenous groups provoked abuses and negative consequences, the positive results of coexistence and cooperation between Russian peoples and native nomadic groups could not be ignored. Indeed many regionalists believed that these interactions had proved beneficial for all groups. Although some Russian historians in the nineteenth century theorized that the indigenous groups of Siberia were incapable of social development and would ultimately disappear, both Potanin and Iadrintsev rejected this idea. Iadrintsev in particular called the judgment of “short-sighted historians” who claimed the indigenous tribes of Siberia would ultimately disappear the “myth of

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<sup>163</sup> Iadrintsev quoted in Ivanov, ““Samyi nasushchnyi vopros Sibiri,”” 72.

charlatans.”<sup>164</sup> Regionalists considered these indigenous groups important not just from a humanitarian standpoint and believed them vital for the overall goal of boosting the region’s socio-economic development. The scientific background of some regionalists gave their examinations legitimacy.

When Potanin enrolled at the university in St. Petersburg in 1859, he did so as a student in the Faculty of Natural History, and he subsequently undertook expeditions to various regions of Siberia, Central Asia, Mongolia, and China as a naturalist, ethnographer, and geographer. By the mid-1860s, Potanin had undertaken expeditions and had published about his explorations, even writing an ethnographic study about the southwestern regions of Tomsk.<sup>165</sup> His skills also helped Potanin craft his ethnographic arguments within the framework of regionalist ideology. In the course of the investigations of the Siberian Separatist Affair, Potanin availed himself of the opportunity to study local indigenous groups like the Jataka, who were something akin to a military proletariat. The Jataka worked for the Cossack military on the Irtysh River, but Potanin believed they were purposefully left out of the military department so they could perform heavy work for the military without enjoying any of the benefits typically accorded soldiers.<sup>166</sup> Again, Potanin looked at groups like the Jataka as vital to the economic life of the region, not a group to be ignored or marginalized.

As his career evolved, Potanin emerged as one of Russia’s most important specialists on Central Asia. Working on the folklore, literature, and mythology of the Turkic-Mongolian groups, Potanin traced the influences of Eastern folklore and mythology on Western literary traditions. In the 1870s he undertook two expeditions to Mongolia, after which he published his

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<sup>164</sup> This was part of a series in *Tomskie gubernskie vedomosti* in 1865. Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, “Etnologicheskie osobennosti sibirskogo naseleniia,” *Tomskie gubernskie vedomosti* No. 15 (23 April 1865), 1-5; No. 17 (7 May 1865), 1-4; No. 18 (14 May 1865), 1-4.

<sup>165</sup> Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 8-9.

<sup>166</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 220.

four-volume *Ocherki Severo-Zapadnoi Mongolii*, which became a standard for students of ethnography and folklore. In *Ocherki Severo-Zapadnoi Mongolii*, Potanin took the position that folklore and mythological stories migrated from east to west, influencing western epic literature. Iadrintsev explored in the Altai region and made expeditions to Mongolia, ultimately carrying out an archaeological expedition that unearthed the ancient capital of Karakorum. His explorations in ethnography and archaeology merged into the Siberian native question, and he produced a work detailing the value of nomadic life in the history of human culture. He condemned what he believed the shortsighted view that nomadic cultures had nothing to contribute to modern civilization. In *Sibirskie inorodtsy: ikh byt i sovremennoe polozhenie*, Iadrintsev said, “True knowledge teaches, impartially, concerns for any form of life, and it brings people together based upon their shared aspirations for life, for happiness, well-being, and justice.”<sup>167</sup> According to Iadrintsev, these transitional cultures—the nomadic way of life—proved important for the sustained cultural development of mankind. To Iadrintsev’s way of thinking, the benefits that nomads offered to the history of mankind were unmistakable, and without the nomadic stage, there could be no human development.<sup>168</sup> All of the varied groups—nomadic, pastoral, agricultural, etc.—represented snapshots in the history of human development, but various groups in Asia and Siberia—“semi-wild tribes,” in Iadrintsev’s words—could provide information about the transitional stages of human development and, therefore, help civilization understand the past, present, and future. The nomadic tribes of North Asia and Siberia should thus be protected.<sup>169</sup> Iadrintsev’s theory on how these Siberian nomadic groups became varied owed much to the theories of Shchapov as elaborated upon in “Istoriko-

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<sup>167</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, *Sibirskie inorodtsy, ikh byt i sovremennoe polozhenie* (Tiumen: Izdatel'stvo Iu. Mandriki, 2000), 274.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 114-115.



geograficheskoe raspredelenie russkogo narodonaseleniia” (“Historic and Geographic Distribution of the Russian Population”) and “Etnograficheskaiia organizatsiia russkogo narodonaseleniia” (“Ethnographic Organization of the Russian Population”).<sup>170</sup>

In his “Etnograficheskaiia organizatsiia russkogo narodonaseleniia,” Shchapov argued that the formation of the nomadic existence owed much to the influence of the environment, concluding that the climate and the geography of Siberia helped shape both the variation in these groups and the evolution of their relationships with Great Russians as they arrived in the region. Iadrintsev picked up on the key elements of Shchapov’s theory, arguing: “Now man and every race and tribe cannot be considered without regard to nature and the area where they live.”<sup>171</sup> In “Istoriko-geograficheskoe raspredelenie russkogo narodonaseleniia,” Shchapov had argued that these various nomadic groups enjoyed distinctive social structures, world-views, beliefs, and customs, and these followed conditions of climate and geography. In the nineteenth century, these groups represented a distinctive anthropological world in the vicinity of European Russia, and they had something to offer the European world.<sup>172</sup> This distinct anthropological world of the nomads, though, represented part of a gradual formation, as nomadic groups absorbed the achievements of earlier stages of cultural development. Therefore, culture and civilization constantly evolved, and these nomadic groups prepared the ground for the next stage of development—settlement. Iadrintsev’s assessment of the “shortsighted” historians who argued that nomadic tribes would ultimately disappear was understandably harsh. As these tribes transitioned into an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, they had much to offer any society willing to

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<sup>170</sup> A.P. Shchapov, “Etnograficheskaiia organizatsiia russkogo narodonaseleniia” and “Istoriko-geograficheskoe raspredelenie russkogo narodonaseleniia,” in *Sochineniia A.P. Shchapova*, Volume 2, 182-364; 365-397.

<sup>171</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibirskie inorodtsy*, (2000), 264.

<sup>172</sup> Shchapov, “Istoriko-geograficheskoe raspredelenie russkogo narodonaseleniia,” *Sochineniia A.P. Shchapova*, Volume 2, 272-273.

understand and incorporate beneficial elements from their cultures. Iadrintsev argued that transitional cultures were vital for the sustained cultural development of mankind because they offered snapshot views into the history of mankind. Without the emergence of a nomadic stage, human development would have ceased.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, the “semi-wild tribes” of Siberia could provide information about future development, and their integration into the life of the region would make Siberia stronger. Since Shchapov and the regionalist leadership believed that these groups had something to offer the European world, their integration into a regionalist vision of Siberia proved extraordinarily important, if.<sup>174</sup> Potanin and Iadrintsev focused on the question of Siberia’s indigenous peoples from a humanitarian standpoint, appreciating that these people needed to be integrated into the Siberian “body.” Before that could be done, however, regionalists had to contend with the question of what constituted “Siberia.”

Simply defining what constituted “Siberia” in the minds of the people of the region proved problematic for regionalists. Members of the regionalist movement constructed a vision of the region as part of the empire, but they also looked at the climate, the economy, the ethnography, etc., to foster a vision of Siberianness. Regionalists incorporated various indigenous tribes into their vision of what constituted Siberianness. These various groups—Buriats, Yakuts, Tuvans, and others—could be fitted into the vision of Siberia because the regionalist construction of Siberia consisted not of a people but a geographical area. However, no single aspect provided an all-encompassing element that could bring the people together in a regionalist representation of what constituted Siberia. Fragmentation, not unity, had been the hallmark of the Siberian existence, and regionalists thus had to find a new way of thinking about the region.

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<sup>173</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibirskie inorodtsy*, (2000), 264.

<sup>174</sup> Shchapov, “Istoriko-geograficheskoe raspredelenie russkogo narodonaseleniia,” *Sochineniia A.P. Shchapova*, Volume 2, 273.

Administratively, the Russian state had treated Siberia as a single unit from Ermak's conquest in the 1580s until the early 1820s, when, as part of Mikhail Speranskii's reforms, Siberia was divided into eastern and western governor-generalships.<sup>175</sup> While Siberia remained administratively divided until the 1880s, territorially, the Russian state still referred to the larger territorial unit simply as "Siberia." Sergei Grigor'evich Svatikov, an adherent of Siberian regionalism and an early historian of the movement, said that the very name Siberia—a name that was designed to cover a tremendous area from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean—gave rise to regionalist ideas and provided members of the regionalist movement with a potential unifying element in their philosophy. The sheer distance of the region from St. Petersburg and the geographical, historical, administrative, and political individuality this distance fostered, promoted the idea of uniqueness. Leaders of the regionalist movement found justification for the idea of Siberia in terms of climatology, economy, and ethnography; however, regionalists believed that conceptualizing Siberia first and foremost as a distinct geographical area provided them with a ready-made vision of the region that people could understand.<sup>176</sup> In summary, Svatikov said, "This vast area that was diverse in so many ways was united by this name."<sup>177</sup> While the kernel of what constituted Siberia existed in the minds of regionalists, forging real connections between what was in fact a diverse region proved problematic. Yet, that did not keep regionalists from theorizing about separatism and the possibility of Siberia's independent development.

As noted earlier, in 1865 the Russian government arrested those regionalists who supposedly supported Siberian separatism. This affair (which will be examined in greater detail

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<sup>175</sup> A good summary of events can be found in W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Conquest of a Continent: Siberia and the Russians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 155-162. For greater detail on Speranskii's reforms, consult Raeff, *Michael Speransky*, 280-307; Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*.

<sup>176</sup> V.G. Mirzoev, *Istoriografiia Sibiri (Domarksistskii period)* (Moscow: Mysl', 1970), 298.

<sup>177</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir*, 4.

subsequently) represented the government's overreaction to the Siberian circle that sprouted in St. Petersburg during the late 1850s and early 1860s. According to Potanin, Iadrintsev reconciled himself to being called a "separatist" by the Russian government, but Potanin said that Iadrintsev never really saw the separatist tendencies in regionalism. Moreover, in his obituary for Iadrintsev, Potanin said that Iadrintsev had actually devoted himself to doing away with whatever separatist elements existed in Siberia.<sup>178</sup> While regionalists argued that Russia's expansion into Siberia paralleled colonial expansion elsewhere, such as British Canada, Australia, and even the United States, few envisioned the complete separation of Siberia from the Russian Empire.<sup>179</sup> While they may have theorized about independence, regionalists, at least in the earliest years of the movement, never thought about their "colony" immediately going the way of independence like Britain's Thirteen Colonies in North America. Indeed, Regionalists understood the Siberian idea as purely territorial, and some of them, like Potanin, understood Siberia as a part of the Russian Empire along with other outlying, ethnically diverse regions of the Russian Empire like Finland or Poland.<sup>180</sup> When interviewed by the inquest commission in Omsk established to determine the depth of the Siberian conspiracy, Potanin and Iadrintsev admitted that the group had discussed political independence for Siberia, but only at some time in the distant future. Potanin told the commission that patriotism should not be confused with political separatism.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 157; Potanin, "Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev: Nekrolog," 172.

<sup>179</sup> In this sense, Siberian regionalism can be considered loyalty to a subnational or supranational area that shares a common culture, background, or interests. But regionalism in its earliest iteration can be considered loyalty to Siberia as part of their broader loyalty to the Russian nation. In this sense, then, Siberian regionalism can be considered a subnational movement during the early 1860s.

<sup>180</sup> Potanin, "Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev: Nekrolog," 171.

<sup>181</sup> Koval', "Kharakter obshchestvennogo dvizheniia 60-kh godov XIX v. v Sibiri," 42; Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 271-272.

Arguing that Russia's expansion into Siberia paralleled the colonial expansions of other European powers, regionalists tried to identify similarities and differences between the colonial experiences that Siberia shared with other European colonies, particularly the path that the United States took towards independence from Great Britain. Regionalists flirted with the comparison, likening Siberia to an area where the creative Russian could develop freely in much the same way that an independent spirit arose among the settlers in the British colonies of North America. Potanin said that the vast expanse and hostile environment of Siberia forged a pronounced form of individualism in much the same way that the openness of North America made rugged individualists of the British colonists. For Potanin, the biggest difference between the British colonies of North America and Siberia was that the British colonists enjoyed a solid political foundation upon which to build an independent nation, whereas Siberians did not.<sup>182</sup> Siberians had potential, but regionalists did not see the basic structures necessary for regional political development. It took years, following on the heels of increased political freedom after the Revolution of 1905, for regionalists, pushed to develop their theories, to establish the importance of a Siberian *zemstvo* in the minds of Siberians as a key element for regional development. Ultimately, regionalists' calls for a Siberian *zemstvo* and increased integration into the Russian Empire, albeit from a position of equality, became supplanted by calls for autonomy, a Siberian Regional Duma, and a federated structure for the entire empire along the lines of the federal system in the United States.<sup>183</sup> Iadrintsev once said, "I was struck by America; it is exactly what Siberia would be like a thousand years hence. It is as if I could see the future of

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<sup>182</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 267, 292.

<sup>183</sup> There is an informative document from the Siberian Regional Duma that is housed in the Tomsk archives that goes into the evolution of political systems, their benefits/drawbacks, and what kind of system would work well for a potential Siberian state. The Regional Duma did not spend much time in Tomsk (January 1918), officially convening only in late January 1918, just before the Bolsheviks in Tomsk either dispersed or arrested the members of the Duma. The section that deals with a federal system can be found in the following location: *GATO*, R-72, op. 1, d. 2, ll. 12, 14.

mankind and of my native land.” Potanin had discussed the need for a realignment of the Russian Empire as a federated system of autonomous republics similar to his conception of the United States.<sup>184</sup> But regionalists initially hoped that the region would assume a level of importance within the empire without separating. Even within the regionalist movement, this represented just one way of approaching Siberia’s position within the Russian Empire.

Whether it was Potanin through his letters to other regionalists or Shashkov who gave public lectures on regionalist theories, regionalists expressed their ideas, plans, and hopes for the region—the overarching goals of educational reform, population increase, industrial development, and ultimately independence—in an open fashion.<sup>185</sup> So perhaps the concept of separatism as envisioned by regionalists in their early history stemmed from their vision of Siberia as a colony of Russia. But if allowed to develop properly, Potanin believed that Siberia could become the new center of gravity for the Russian state. Iadrintsev and Potanin differed in their interpretation. Iadrintsev believed that Russia’s development of Siberia had been purposely kept to a minimum. The Russian government created policy designed to keep Siberia dependent upon European Russia, suitable only for receiving imports from European Russia—from manufactured goods to exiles.<sup>186</sup> Iadrintsev and Potanin expanded their arguments concerning how the region suffered from governmental policy. Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov argued that Siberia’s backwardness relative to European Russia arose because of the long history of administrative lawlessness in Siberia, where the state encouraged the governors to tax the region and its inhabitants to enrich themselves and the Russian government. Such a theory contributed to the idea that Siberia should become independent. For the most part, however, regionalism

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<sup>184</sup> T.M. Farafontova, “Cherty iz zhizni sibirskogo patriota: K 80-letnemu iubileiu G.N. Potanina,” *Russkaia mysl’*, Vol. 36, No. 9 (1915), 152.

<sup>185</sup> Svatikov, *Rossii i Sibir’*, 55.

<sup>186</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, “Sibir’ v 1-e ianvaria 1865 goda,” *Tomskie gubernskie vedomosti* № 1 (8 January 1865), 1-4.

vacillated between ideas of the establishment of autonomous status for Siberia within the Russian Empire and the idea of independent development for the Siberian “colony” tied to the European “center.” While the eventual coming of the Trans-Siberian Railroad in the 1890s would promote the increasing integration of Siberia with the rest of Russia, many regionalists saw this as integration based upon the central government’s desires. For regionalists, this kind of integration merely reinforced Siberia’s. Potanin believed that centralized government brought more harm than good and that properly developed governments should be constructed from the periphery towards the center. As closer ties to the center provoked discussions about the drawbacks of continued association with the Russian Empire, separatism took on an increased level of fascination for regionalists.

One of the ways in which the regionalists’ vision for Siberia departed from Shchapov’s theories was in their analysis of Siberia’s potential for becoming a federation. The distinct difference boiled down to the difference between Russia as a federation (and Siberia as a part of the whole) and Siberia as a federation in and of itself. Although it should be emphasized that regionalists built upon Shchapov’s vision of the democratic nature of the Siberian region. For regionalists, the absence of serfdom and nobility provided a foundation for the democratic character of the region. Historian and regionalist Sergei Grigor’evich Svatikov claimed, “Siberia is a region distinct from Russia, dissimilar from it in many respects, having the right to its own particular existence and development as a component part of the Russian state *or even outside of it.*”<sup>187</sup> Regionalists, therefore, discussed independence as a viable option for Siberia, and they had to theorize on how to nurture elements within the society that could foster independent growth for the region.

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<sup>187</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiiia i Sibir*, 61. [Emphasis added.]

Potanin saw both elements of subservience and potential for independence among the military. While still relatively young, Potanin concluded that some Cossacks tended towards radicalism and could thus become patriots of Siberia, as he considered them repressed by the Russian state. As a young officer in Omsk, Potanin even tried to agitate among Cossack officers. While in St. Petersburg, he told Fedor Nikolaevich Usov, “More and more I start to attach value to our troops, if only they had education and unity of consciousness.”<sup>188</sup> Later, Potanin told Usov again, “I am now convinced that our army is so ignorant, so devoid of ideas about human dignity, that it is very difficult to moralize [*moralizirovat*'] but moralizing this group has its merits.”<sup>189</sup> Potanin would later write to Usov to “lay off of Siberian Cossack patriotism” and simply emphasize the potential role of the military in the future of the region, particularly how Siberian soldiers could create solidarity with Siberian students.<sup>190</sup> Even though they found it difficult to promote their views among some Siberian groups, regionalists still encouraged the federalist vision of Siberia envisioned by Shchapov.

While regionalists adopted Shchapov’s vision of a federation for Siberia, they also took their cues from their conception of a federalist United States. From the very earliest meetings in St. Petersburg, members of the Siberian fraternity based their visions for Siberia on the destiny of independence. In 1858, Potanin read an article by Il’ia Nikolaevich Berezin in the journal *Otechestvennye zapiski* (*Notes of the Fatherland*—St. Petersburg), in which the author argued that colonies, particularly agricultural colonies, must be separated from their mother country. Potanin said that he had understood this for a long time, but in reading Berezin’s article, he arrived at several conclusions, the first of which was that Siberia was a colony. Potanin came to the realization that Siberia was a penal colony, that colonies typically ended with separation from

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<sup>188</sup> Potanin to F.N. Usov, 7 September 1859, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 40.

<sup>189</sup> Potanin to F.N. Usov, 5 February 1860, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 44.

<sup>190</sup> Potanin to F.N. Usov, December 1864, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 70.



the mother country, and that Siberia would ultimately share the fate of colonies like her.<sup>191</sup> While Iadrintsev pointed out, however, this independence was seen as a remote, though inevitable, historical event, Potanin and various regionalists sought similarities between other colonies and Siberia, hoping to achieve an understanding the historical trajectory of Siberia.

The quest to understand Siberia's destiny led regionalists to compare Siberia and the United States. In his letters, Potanin revealed a desire to have a system of government for Siberia that approached the government of America. In a letter to N.S. Shchukin in August 1860, Potanin indicated his intention to study the American Revolution and to produce an article based upon this study. Potanin stated that the movement should focus on centralizing Siberia and ridding the region of the divided nature of Siberian administration under the tsarist regime.<sup>192</sup> Potanin understood that before any potential Siberian federation could be realized, Siberia needed to construct a group of leaders. He lamented the lack of Siberian leadership in a letter to Shchukin in January 1862, writing: "Now we need proclamations ... Now we need Jeffersons, Franklins ..." <sup>193</sup> Ultimately, Potanin believed it was too early to act on the question of independence, but that did not stop some regionalists from theorizing on how Siberia could gain its independence.

Regionalists held America up as a concrete example of how Siberia's future could pan out. They believed that comparing Siberia to America revealed some distinct differences, but they also hoped that one day Siberia would come to resemble America. Prior to the Russian government's sale of the Russian-American Company—Alaska—to the United States, some regionalists even believed it possible to gain American support for an independent Siberian federation in exchange for Alaska. For years afterwards, regionalists theorized about how Siberia

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<sup>191</sup> Sesiunina, *G.N. Potanin i N.M. Iadrintsev*, 22-23.

<sup>192</sup> Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, 15 August 1860, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 47-49.

<sup>193</sup> Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, 26 August 1860, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 57-58.

could emerge as a nation similar to America. As Iadrintsev said later in life, “We ourselves were convinced from other people’s mouths that the region was lost ... And this region, outcast, outraged should have a future—was not this a discovery?”<sup>194</sup> Visualizing Siberia as something akin to an American-style republic in Asia, Iadrintsev studied American history and even traveled to Chicago for the 1893 Columbia Exposition. Iadrintsev had hoped to turn his recollections, notes, and observations into a book comparing the life and the history of America to the Siberian experience. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to produce the book. Regionalists proved to be capable theorists about regional development and potential independence, but they struggled to find concrete means of turning theories into reality. With the conspicuous absence of an educated public that could understand and foster regionalist theories about development for Siberia, regionalists believed that very few avenues were open for unifying the region. While regionalists saw multiple barriers standing in the way of regional development, they hoped that an emerging Siberian intelligentsia could be used to unify the various elements in Siberian society.

Potanin believed that Siberia offered tremendous potential, and while geography proved a hindrance, the true hope for achieving social unity and development resided in the nascent Siberian intelligentsia. Potanin argued that “Siberia, with its vast, scattered territory, has no real solidarity between its parts among the popular masses, and unity only occurs among the intelligentsia rather than among the masses ....”<sup>195</sup> For Potanin, then, Siberia was better served through the unification of the intelligentsia.<sup>196</sup> This represented one reason why regionalists believed that fostering the development of an educational system—particularly a university—proved vital. Potanin said that so many young students left Siberia for a university city, and they

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<sup>194</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, “Pis’mo o Rodine,” *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (6 December 1884) № 49.

<sup>195</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 291.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

rarely returned. They stayed in these cities and, after getting placed in factories, hospitals, and gymnasiums outside of Siberia, they never returned to their home region and, therefore, never contributed to Siberian development.<sup>197</sup> To prevent the pillaging of Siberia's intellectual resources, regionalists demanded a better educational system for the region.

Because regionalists believed education critical to the development of the region, members of the movement actively encouraged the establishment of a university. A Siberian university, for regionalists, constituted merely the beginning. As the new university trained teachers and gave birth to a growing Siberian intelligentsia, the trickle-down effect would be felt as schools, libraries, bookstores, book publishers, newspapers, and magazines would be established throughout the region. Iadrintsev believed that Siberian society had wasted its potential. He looked over the region and saw weak educational institutions, poor cultural expression, and colonial attachment to European Russia. In "Sibir' v 1-e ianvaria 1865 goda" (Siberia on the First of January 1865) Iadrintsev asserted, "Few of our cities have libraries, in the whole of Siberia there is not a single private printing press, not even book stores ..." But he held out hope that Siberia would "unite from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean to create new life for Siberia."<sup>198</sup> In lieu of a home-grown educated group that would understand regionalist theories, exiled intellectuals provided a substitute.

Exiles, Polish exiles in particular, sent to Siberia deeply influenced the regionalist discussion concerning autonomy and integration. Although the Russian government moved to quash ideas of Siberian separatism during the Siberian Separatist Affair in 1865, Polish exiles in the region kept the idea of separatism alive for Poland and thus kept minds on idea of Siberian separatism. Among regionalists, Potanin and Iadrintsev realized that the best way to secure

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 291-292.

<sup>198</sup> Iadrintsev, "Sibir' v 1-e ianvaria 1865 goda," 1-4.

autonomous status for Siberia within the Russian Empire was by acquiring autonomy for other regions and groups within the Russian Empire that were territorially, politically, and ethnically distinct from the traditional Great Russian center.<sup>199</sup> While hopes for an independent Siberia were seemingly uprooted following the arrests in 1865, the idea remained alive as evidenced by some of the discussions taking place in the regionalist congress and at conferences in Tomsk during the revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

Later, when the time came for regionalists to identify their positions on separatism and independence, Potanin played a game of semantics. He argued that the question of independence had been bandied about for years, but Siberians theorized about independence only in some vaguely defined (or even some undefined) future. Potanin conceded that the overarching goal of regionalism in its earliest incarnation was to encourage Siberians to study their homeland in an effort to foster patriotism and, eventually, a desire for Siberian separatism at some unspecified point.<sup>200</sup> S.G. Svatikov said that regionalists had debated the possibility of Siberia gaining independence similar to the way that America had gained independence, but those were “dreams of the distant future.” Svatikov also said that the question of separating Siberia from Russia was absent in Iadrintsev’s political philosophy, and Potanin, when questioned about separatism years later, said that there was no plan to declare Siberian independence. References to Siberian independence in the correspondence between members of the movement only represented the prevailing issues of the day rather than a concrete plan for secession.<sup>201</sup> There emerged, then, a distinction between discussing the possibility of independent development for Siberia—a possibility that many Siberians of the day discussed—and openly advocating revolution for the

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<sup>199</sup> It is intriguing that regionalists and others tended to think of a “Great Russian” center, as various elements that were not considered “Great Russian” in a proper sense composed this region of the Russian Empire.

<sup>200</sup> Potanin to A.D. Shaitanov, April 1863, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 65-66.

<sup>201</sup> Svatikov, *Rossia i Sibir*, 54-55.

sake of gaining independence. As so often happened with political semantics in late Imperial Russia, the government failed to distinguish between these points-of-view and therefore launched an investigation of the regionalist movement.

While the activities of the regionalists provoked a crisis for the movement, it was not the first time that questions of separatism had emanated from Siberia. Many European Russians believed that the first governor of Siberia—Prince Matvei Petrovich Gagarin—had sought to free Siberia from the rest of the empire and set up his own kingdom.<sup>202</sup> When it came to Siberia's potential for independence, I.I. Pushchin, a Decembrist exiled to Siberia following the abortive uprising in December 1825, wrote, "It could at once separate from the mother country and it would not be in need of anything."<sup>203</sup> According to historian Norman G.O. Pereira, "[The idea of Siberian separatism was] the subject of heated and serious discussion during the 1850s in the small circle of advisers around the eccentric N.N. Murav'ev-Amurskii, governor-general of Eastern Siberia."<sup>204</sup> Similarities between Populists and regionalists concerning the possibility for Siberian independence also created a potential problem for the regionalists. Members of the Populist movement looked favorably upon the idea of Siberia's separation from Russia, and Populism's position as the leading Russian revolutionary movement in the 1870s meant that any connection between Populist and regionalist ideology contributed to the government's interpretation of regionalism as a radical and revolutionary movement. Aleksandr Herzen, long considered a philosophical forefather of Populism, said, "If Siberia were to be separated from Russia tomorrow, we would be the first to welcome the new life. The unity of the State is quite

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 5-6; Valentin Rasputin, *Siberia*, Siberia Margaret Winchell and Gerald Mikkelson trans. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 112-114.

<sup>203</sup> I.I. Pushchin quoted in Norman G.O. Pereira, *White Siberia: The Politics of Civil War* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 20.

<sup>204</sup> Pereira, *White Siberia*, 20; See also Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Volume 1, (1899), 197-198.

incompatible with the welfare of the people.”<sup>205</sup> The Soviet historian S.F. Koval’ hinted at the possibility that these cumulative calls for Siberian separation rubbed off on regionalism to a certain extent, prompting regionalist calls for Siberian independence from Russia. Koval’ even went so far as to claim that Siberia represented “a serious potential reserve” for Russia’s revolutionary democrats.<sup>206</sup>

No matter how regionalists became acquainted with separatist ideas, the Russian government’s response mirrored the increasingly conservative reaction of the government towards the growth of radical political groups throughout the empire. Shashkov said that the late 1850s and early 1860s saw the Russian government’s anxiety over separatist groups within the empire—Belorussian, Siberian, Polish, etc.—grow to a fever pitch. While Shashkov admitted that there were a few Siberian separatist dreamers in St. Petersburg, he argued that the government’s fears of Siberian separatism were nothing more than the paranoid hallucinations of the government’s spy chief.<sup>207</sup> To Shashkov, it was not surprising that young Siberian students should discuss separatism, but the government’s reaction, in Shashkov’s mind, proved extreme.<sup>208</sup>

According to Mikhail Konstantinovich Lemke’s biography of Iadrintsev, the Siberian Separatist Affair was triggered by the government’s attempt to suppress the “young enthusiasts,

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<sup>205</sup> Herzen quoted in Koval’, “Kharakter obshchestvennogo dvizheniia 60-kh godov XIX v. v Sibiri,” 39. For additional information on Russian radicalism early regionalism, see Alan Wood, “Chernyshevskii, Siberian Exile and *Oblastnichestvo*,” in Roger Bartlett, ed., *Russian Thought and Society: Essays in Honour of Eugene Lampert* (Keele, University of Keele, 1984), 42-66.

<sup>206</sup> Koval’, “Kharakter obshchestvennogo dvizheniia 60-kh godov XIX v. v Sibiri,” 51. As Koval’ was a Soviet scholar, his assessment of the situation should be taken with the requisite skepticism, but his ideas can prove very useful.

<sup>207</sup> Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov, “Kur’eznoe delo,” in *Sibirskie Voprosy*, Volume 6, Numbers 10-11 (28 March 1910), 33-34. Of course, Shashkov’s analysis should be taken with a grain of salt, as he was one of the accused regionalists sent to Omsk to answer questions before the inquiry commission.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

full of the desire to work for the benefit of their country.”<sup>209</sup> After the government arrested several regionalists and sent them to Omsk, the Governor-General’s office launched its investigation, calling it an “investigation [into] ‘the case of Siberian separatism’ or ‘the affair of separating Russian Siberia and the opening of a republic like the United States.’” Iadrintsev speculated that the government’s description of the investigation aimed to inflame people. The arrest of key members of the movement in the major cities of both Siberian and European Russia, including Omsk, Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Uralsk, followed on the heels of the investigation.<sup>210</sup> Though Iadrintsev attempted to paint a dramatic picture of the affair, saying that it “caused quite a stir,” the reality of the situation played out in a far more mundane way.

Looking back forty-plus years later, Potanin commented on how the Russian government finally broached the topic of the existence of a separatist movement in the Siberian cities of Omsk, Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk, and Irkutsk, among other places.<sup>211</sup> In the wake of the Polish uprising in 1863, the Russian government had already started investigating other political movements, including (as of early 1864) the small Siberian circle that started in the university atmosphere of St. Petersburg. The discovery of copies of the proclamation “To the Patriots of Siberia” in the Siberian Cadet Corps and of a similar proclamation in Irkutsk in 1865 caused the government to ramp up the investigation into the regionalist movement and to push for a proper hearing in Omsk. These discoveries, forwarded to Governor-General’s Office in Omsk, provided the motivation for the Russian government to strike against the nascent regionalist movement.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 62.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-3.

<sup>211</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 270.

<sup>212</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 92-100.

First, a handwritten copy of the proclamation “To the Patriots of Siberia” was discovered in the Omsk Cadet Corps. According to Potanin, Esaul Usov, the youngest brother of Fedor Nikolaevich Usov [a Cossack officer and member of the regionalist movement] and Grigorii Nikolaevich Usov [a newly commissioned officer], had found a handwritten copy of the proclamation “To the Patriots of Siberia” in his brothers’ apartment and, thinking it “a curious thing,” took it to the Siberian Cadet Corps in Omsk.<sup>213</sup> For the prosecutors, this proclamation exhibited extraordinarily radical ideas, promoting as it did the immediate secession of Siberia and the liberation of the entire empire and urging its readers not to be afraid of the “holy cause of liberation” for Siberia.<sup>214</sup> Those people who had fled Siberian cities for an education in European Russia needed to return to fulfill this holy cause. Siberians who migrated from Siberia for a better education and a better life in European Russia should realize that no matter where they traveled, they were in reality captives of the empire. While Siberian intellectuals flooded European Russia, the empire reciprocated by pumping Siberia full of criminals and corrupt inhabitants.<sup>215</sup> The proclamation went on to argue that the best example for the Siberian people was America, which meant that Siberia had to prepare the young people for a revolt.<sup>216</sup> After the younger Usov read the proclamation to two of his comrades, one of the young men, according to Shashkov, took the manuscript and threatened to inform their superiors if Usov refused to give him a cigarette and an after-meal cake. This same young man, again, according to Shashkov, called a few of the cadets together in order to read the proclamation to them, and one of the security officers took note of the gathering. While the young man tried to hide the proclamation,

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<sup>213</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 270; *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 34, 95-96; Shashkov, “Kur’eznoe delo,” 35-36.

<sup>214</sup> The full text of the proclamation can be found in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 95; Iadrintsev, “K moei avtobiografii,” 92-95.

<sup>215</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 95; Iadrintsev, “K moei avtobiografii,” 154-155.

<sup>216</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir*, 58.



the security officer confiscated the proclamation and passed it to the leadership of the Siberian Cadet Corps. The leaders subsequently handed the proclamation over to the gendarmes.<sup>217</sup> The three cadets were arrested, and a search warrant was issued for Fedor and Grigorii Usov's room, which carried the provision that they could be arrested should anything incriminating be found.

In the course of searching the Usovs' room on either the 27<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1865, government agents discovered a lithograph machine and copies of works by Pierre Proudhon ["Confession of a Revolutionary"], by Alexander Herzen, and by Potanin and Iadrintsev.<sup>218</sup> Letters between Potanin and Usov in which the latter lamented that "Siberia needs to be unified ... [but] our silence seems to leave [Siberians] at a standstill..." proved of particular interest to the investigators.<sup>219</sup> To save themselves from the firing squad, the Usovs named names of regionalists from Irkutsk, Krasnoyarsk, Tomsk, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. In light of the information discovered and the supposedly widespread conspiracy in Siberia, the Governor-General's office in Omsk sent telegrams, ordering searches at the houses of Potanin, Iadrintsev, Shchukin, and other members of the movement.<sup>220</sup>

Shchukin claimed that the Usov brothers named him, although they only knew him from some of his publications.<sup>221</sup> No matter who identified Shchukin, the Governor-General's office in Omsk telegraphed Irkutsk on 29 May 1865, ordering the search of Shchukin's house and stipulating that, should anything incriminating be found, the agents were to seize the evidence, arrest Shchukin, and transport both Shchukin and the evidence to the Omsk Commission. Upon moving to Irkutsk in 1861, Shchukin had been the leader of a small circle of the local intelligentsia. Moreover, during the years preceding the separatist affair in Omsk, he had

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<sup>217</sup> Shashkov, "Kur'eznoe delo," 11-12.

<sup>218</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir'*, 58; *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 95-97.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 97-98.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-96; Shashkov, "Kur'eznoe delo," 35-36.

<sup>221</sup> Shashkov, "Kur'eznoe delo," 36.

produced several articles and offered lectures that explored regionalist theories on the problems confronting Siberia and how regionalists sought to solve these problems. Shchukin's lectures and articles were damaging enough, but, as the government agents carried out their search, they found a copy of the proclamation "To Siberian Patriots," a discovery which carried the potential for a very radical reaction by the government.<sup>222</sup>

Again, this proclamation, initially penned by Popov, grappled with the problems of the Siberian exile system and St. Petersburg's high-handed, imperialist style of governing Siberia, particularly the wanton reliance upon local officials who pillaged the resources of the region. Throughout the appeal "To Siberian Patriots," Popov examined the problems inherent to Siberian society—exile, economic exploitation, etc.—while laying the foundation for the principle of Siberian independence (eventually, of course). In doing so, he also promoted a vision for a democratic republic in Siberia. For Popov, Siberia's very nature promoted a feeling of freedom, which would make independence an easily achievable objective. With that independence would come the realization that Siberia might very well be the first Slavic nation to enjoy the benefits of a democratic republic. Finally, the proclamation closed with a resounding chorus: "Long live the Republic of the United States of Siberia! Long live Siberian freedom—from the Urals to the shores of the Pacific Ocean!"<sup>223</sup> Naturally, government representatives arrested Shchukin and sent him and all of the evidence gathered against him to Omsk for a thorough examination by the commission.<sup>224</sup> Interrogations of the Usov brothers and Shchukin, however, represented only the beginning of the affair.

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<sup>222</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 122-123; Shashkov, "Kur'eznoe delo," 36-37. For a brief biography of Shchukin, see Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii*, 92-94.

<sup>223</sup> The full text can be found in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 123-130.

<sup>224</sup> Shashkov, "Kur'eznoe delo," 36-37.

Initially, the crisis did not appear particularly important, at least not to some government officials in Siberia. The Governor-General of Western Siberia, Aleksandr O. Diugamel', who was in St. Petersburg when he received news of the arrests, viewed the situation lightly, assuming that, "The opening of the [Omsk] conspiracy has strongly implicated some of the officers of the Siberian Cossack Corps." "These young fools," he continued, "have started to separate Siberia from the empire based on the federal model of the North American United States." While Diugamel' initially rushed back to Omsk, in his autobiography he declared that he did not see any real danger in the ideas of a few dozen people, except as they indicated problems in the universities and schools.<sup>225</sup> Once started, though, the inquest commission picked up momentum and started arresting others.

Like Shchukin and the Usov brothers, Potanin had his house searched and his papers seized. Similarly, Iadrintsev and other regionalists found their homes the objects of searches and seizures. All told, more than thirty members of the regionalist movement and those most prominently associated with the movement—Potanin, Iadrintsev, Shchukin, Usov, Shashkov, and Shchapov—suffered arrest. Potanin was listed as having associated with many different people—"agitators" according to the Russian government—like Bakunin, Shchapov, and Chernyshevsky, and the government ratcheted-up the investigation. The government brought the regionalists to Omsk, where the Omsk Inquest Commission continued its investigation of the movement to determine the nature of regionalism and what course of action should be taken. Ultimately, the government handed down an indictment of the group, which said: "These people, talking about the need to unite Siberia, print articles in newspapers and excite residents and troops to an independent way of thinking, expressed in the highest criminal way [things] about the emperor,

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<sup>225</sup> A.O. Diugamel quoted in Svatikov, *Rossiiia i Sibir'*, 60-61.

the empress, and the heir to the throne.”<sup>226</sup> Once indicted, the commission conducted a thorough investigation of the movement’s members, their ideas, and their publications. The commission focused its powerful investigatory microscope on Potanin and Iadrintsev in particular.

According to N.V. Serebrennikov, the Omsk Commission went to great lengths to prove that members of the St. Petersburg Siberian circle constituted an antigovernmental group, that they had “received this revolutionary mentality in St. Petersburg,” and that they had actively engaged in a “mad rush to overthrow the existing order.”<sup>227</sup> While various members of the movement, particularly Iadrintsev and Shashkov, resented this analysis, Potanin found himself the object of the “special attention of the investigative commission,” which looked at his psychology and the means he used to “deceive minds.” However, during the investigation, Potanin was said to have answered the commissioners’ questions “calmly and coolly.” Serebrennikov notes that whereas Iadrintsev and Shashkov “concealed their authorship or affiliation [with the] appeal [“To Siberian Patriots”], Potanin announced that all [члены—members of the movement] wrote ‘under the inspiration of conscience.’”<sup>228</sup> Later, Potanin claimed that there was nothing to hide from the commission and the regionalists had no intention of separating Siberia from Russia.

Many of the people involved in the separatist affair denied that they were separatists. Many of the regionalists caught up in the affair later reflected on their position, claiming that the idea of separatism was nothing more than a dream for a distant future of Siberia.<sup>229</sup> Remembering the separatist affair almost thirty years later, Iadrintsev wrote, “What could we answer for the commission of inquiry’s questions? In our hearts was a sincere desire for peace

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<sup>226</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 269-271.

<sup>227</sup> N.V. Serebrennikov, “Delo Sibirskikh separatistov s točki zreniia vlast’ prederzhashchikh,” in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii* (Tomsk: Izdatel’stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2002), 6-7.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>229</sup> Iadrintsev, “Shizn’ i trudy A.P. Shchapova.”

and goodness of our forgotten home; education and civic prosperity were our dreams for her. In youthful dreams and desires, many local issues were still vague and received a known shape and a thesis only afterwards. We answered that our desire for Siberia was public trial, promotion of industry, greater rights for the natives. What was criminal in that? What was criminal in passionate love for our homeland? But here, patriotism was conceived as separatism”<sup>230</sup> Perhaps this was a question, again, of semantics. Regardless of whether separatism was a distant dream or an active plan, the commission essentially split the defendants into guilty and innocent, and it accused Potanin, Iadrinsev, and Shchukin of attempting to overthrow the existing order in Siberia. Others were charged with associating with this group. Shchukin, Potanin, and Iadrinsev became prisoners in the Omsk fortress, but they were essentially half prisoners. Some of the prisoners managed to go to the city pub occasionally.<sup>231</sup> During the course of the investigation, people named other members of the movement, and thus the commission brought Shchapov to Omsk in order to answer for his role in the regionalist movement.

While Shchapov’s influence on the regionalist movement proved undeniable, the Omsk Commission focused exclusively on whether Shchapov had authored the proclamation “To Siberian Patriots.” Previously, Potanin had showed Shchapov’s poem about Siberia to Shchukin, and this apparently led Shchukin to believe that Shchapov was the author of “To Siberian Patriots.”<sup>232</sup> However, when questioned about the poem by the commission, Potanin declared that he could not verify whether Shchapov was its author. In fact, Potanin stated that he could not even remember from whom he took the verses, but he “certifi[ed] that he did not get them from Shchapov, with whom he was not even familiar.”<sup>233</sup> The commission questioned several

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<sup>230</sup> Dubrovskii, *Rozhdennye v strane*, 112-113.

<sup>231</sup> Potanin, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri*, Volume 6, 212-214.

<sup>232</sup> Potanin to N.S. Shchukin, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 61-62.

<sup>233</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 230.

members about the ideas and program of the movement, and the regionalists' reactions to the commission's questions varied as widely as their personalities.

When Iadrintsev came before the commission, he was questioned about his positions on *zemstvo* reform and the establishment of a Siberian university. When asked what the regionalists would like to do for their homeland and why they were indignant, Iadrintsev scoffed: "Was it possible to respond openly? ... Really, such questions were designed to put people in prison."<sup>234</sup> According to Iadrintsev, "We could respond to them [such questions] only when the whole of society had been given a voice—was given the freedom to express their deepest desires."<sup>235</sup> Still, some members of the movement expressed the hope that a Siberian *zemstvo* would come into being or that a university for Siberia could be established.

When asked about the regionalist idea of separatism and who pushed this conception during the discussions in the Siberian circle in St. Petersburg, Potanin asserted that he had first encountered the idea of Siberian separatism after enrolling in the Siberian Cadet Corps in 1846, and that, contrary to the commission's theory, he carried these ideas to St. Petersburg in 1858 rather than developing them in the capital. While Potanin brought separatist ideas to St. Petersburg, the meetings of the Siberian circle at the capital gave him and his fellow Siberians the opportunity to develop them further.

According to Potanin, two articles which had theorized about the status of Siberia's position within the Russian Empire—Il'ia Nikolaevich Berezin's "Metropoliia i koloniia," from *Otechestvennye zapiski* and G.G. Peizen's "Istoricheskii ocherk kolonizatsii Sibiri" from *Sovremennik*—deeply influenced his point of view that the Russian Empire treated Siberia as a

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<sup>234</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov," in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri: O literature, Stikhotvorenii. Pis'ma. Vospominaniia o N.M. Iadrintseve*, Volume 5, N.N. Ianovskii, ed., (Novosibirsk: Zapadnom-Sibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1980), 147-148.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 148.

colonial holding.<sup>236</sup> Berezin's conclusion that colonies should be separated from their mother countries profoundly influenced Potanin. Both articles, according to Potanin, "aroused [his] local instincts."<sup>237</sup> For Potanin, these articles confirmed his belief that he and other youths harbored similar sentiments about the potential for Siberian independence, even if that independence came in the distant future.<sup>238</sup> The basis of Potanin's argument was that people were thinking and writing about this topic, and the particular affair that caught up the members of the regionalist movement in the government's dragnet was nothing more sinister than the expression of ideas that everyone else shared. If the blame for the separatist affair should fall on anyone, Potanin declared, it should fall on him. He argued that he had picked up the ideas about separatism in the Siberian Cadet Corps, had brought the ideas to St. Petersburg, and once there, had encouraged others in the university's Siberian Circle to debate the question of Siberian separatism. Moreover, Potanin believed that the government had failed to understand the situation within the movement. While regionalists had discussed the concept of secession, they had not planned any concrete action. All that the regionalists wanted, Potanin asserted, was to gain the attention of the Siberian people and to foster independent thinking about Siberia's current situation within the empire, helping Siberians to realize the region's future potential. The trial had become a question of Siberian separatism, but the regionalists founded their vision on Siberian patriotism.<sup>239</sup> Iadrintsev concurred with Potanin's assessment of the movement's goals, stating that separatism was discussed as a future goal, but that the regionalists had not the means to achieve separatism, even if they wanted to do so. Siberia was essentially a dumping place for exiles and a vast

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<sup>236</sup> Il'ia Nikolaevich Berezin, "Metropoliia i koloniia," in *Otechestvennye zapiski*, Volume 118, No. 5 (1858), 74-115. G.G. Peizen, "Istoricheskii ocherk kolonizatsii Sibiri," in *Sovremennik*, Volume 77, No. 9, (1859), pp. 9-46.

<sup>237</sup> Potanin, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri*, Volume 6, 80.

<sup>238</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir'*, 58-59.

<sup>239</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 271; Potanin, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri*, Volume 6, 217-219.

expanse of snow, Iadrintsev argued, and for this area to dream of fighting against such an extraordinarily large and powerful state would only occur to madmen and children, not the members of this movement. For the most part, Potanin and Iadrintsev managed to keep their composure during the hearings. Others, however, broke under the pressure.

The commission heard evidential testimony from multiple members of the Russian gendarmerie and interrogated many regionalists. While the Omsk Commission focused on Potanin, Iadrintsev, Shashkov, many others were subjected to examination. The commission proved willing to resort to intimidation in an effort to exact testimonies from the regionalists. Those who testified before the commission found themselves “surrounded by soldiers with loaded guns and led about with fixed bayonets...”<sup>240</sup> This led to inaccurate and contradictory testimonies. For example, intimidation used when trying to establish authorship of the proclamation “To the Siberian Patriots” prompted contradictory testimony and recriminations from members of the movement.

During the hearings, Nikolai Semenovich Shchukin constantly changed his testimony about the authorship of “To the Siberian Patriots.” Investigators discovered a handwritten copy of the proclamation during the search of Shchukin’s house in Irkutsk in May 1865, and during the initial investigation, Shchukin claimed that Andrei Zolotov, a young military school student, had brought the proclamation to his apartment and showed it to him. Too busy read the proclamation at the time, Shchukin told the young cadet to copy it into a notebook until he had time to read it. Shchukin then forgot about the proclamation until government agents discovered it in a search of his papers, at which point he claimed not to know who had authored the proclamation.<sup>241</sup> Before the Omsk Commission, Shchukin changed his story, insisting, on 6 July

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<sup>240</sup> Iadrintsev, “Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov,” 148.

<sup>241</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 122-123.



1865, that Shchapov had authored the declaration.<sup>242</sup> Not surprisingly, the commission called for Shchapov, who denied authorship. Less than a month later [and only after a confrontation between Shchapov and Shchukin], Shchukin knelt before Shchapov, asked his forgiveness, and declared to the commissioners that he merely suspected that Shchapov had authored the proclamation.<sup>243</sup> Shchukin would subsequently claim that *he* wrote the proclamation. Intimidation and coercion provoked slander and false confessions. In fact, the stresses of the commission's inquiry proved too much for Shchukin, who, according to Iadrintsev, was "poor and mad" and giving false testimony against other members of the movement.<sup>244</sup> He may have been one of the most prominent examples, but he was, however, not the only defendant to offer false testimony.

Like Shchukin, Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov struggled with the commission's questioning. While in Krasnoyarsk, Shashkov found that lectures he had given while visiting Tomsk [lectures that covered topics such as the future of Siberian society, the necessity of Siberia's independence, and the relative backwardness of the region] had brought him under scrutiny by the commission, and he ultimately had to answer questions about his public proclamations before it.<sup>245</sup> While under interrogation, Shashkov incriminated others within the movement. Looking back on the situation following Shashkov's death, Iadrintsev argued that he had been broken by the experience. His former spirit had "disappeared, and his idealism had been replaced by the bitter gall of skepticism."<sup>246</sup> The investigation broke the members in

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<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 181-182.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>244</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 157-158; Potanin, "Vospominaniia," from *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* Number 76 (13 April 1914), 3.

<sup>245</sup> Shashkov, "Kur'eznoe delo," 41-45; Iadrintsev, "Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov," 146-147.

<sup>246</sup> Iadrintsev, "Serafim Serafimovich Shashkov," 148. Iadrintsev's brief biography of Shashkov (pp. 144-152 in *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri*) was compiled from a series of articles published in *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and *Delo*.

another, far more important way. Regionalists, like liberals throughout the Russian Empire, had looked to the tsarist regime to reform the society. The Great Reforms had seemingly confirmed that belief. However, regionalists who believed that reforms issued by the Russian government would promote change for Siberia found their efforts regarded with suspicion. Their hope in government-fostered reforms designed to elevate Siberia's position within the empire dissipated in the course of the separatist affair. As the Omsk Commission held the leaders of the regionalist movement in Omsk while it determined their fates, the members of the movement faced the same quandary. They had to find a way to create change for Siberia *outside* of government-sponsored reforms, and they had to do so in short order. Although governmental officials with positions in Siberia saw no real problem in Siberian regionalism, the central government took a strong stand against the movement and its members.

Local officials such as Aleksandr O. Diugamel', the Governor-General of Western Siberia, believed that Siberian regionalism represented no threat to the central government. Diugamel' concluded [in a fashion similar to Potanin] that Potanin's separatist ideas, contrary to the commission's assumption, started not in the capital but at home in Siberia. He claimed that for students, it was "alien to participate in maliciousness and that the idea of separation of Siberia from Russia was ridiculous."<sup>247</sup> However, Diugamel's assessment did not mirror the commission's findings. Once the commission deemed that regionalists had participated in a separatist plot, Potanin assumed responsibility for bringing separatist ideas to the Siberian circle in St. Petersburg. The commission, however, considered Potanin's testimony evidence that the members of the Siberian circle in St. Petersburg belonged to a conspiratorial organization led by Potanin. When the central government questioned the committee's chairman about the

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<sup>247</sup> Aleksandr O. Diugamel', "Avtobiografiia A.O. Diugamelia," in *Russkii Arkhiv*, Volume 23, Number 10 (1885), 178-179.

investigation's progress, he responded, "Potanin confessed that he initiated Siberian separatism, then followed it up considerably in the proclamation." Apparently, Iadrintsev said the same, claiming that he acted in the name of Siberian separatism, writing about this in his private letters and articles.<sup>248</sup> Later, in the political atmosphere following the Revolution of 1905, Potanin and others struggled to understand how the government, Russians, and Siberians would view such politically charged words as separatism, autonomy, and self-government. Potanin thus moved away from his previous statements that patriotism towards a region should not be confused with separatism, gravitating towards a vision where regionalism and separatism coexisted. He did not go so far as to argue in favor of outright separation from the state, but he asserted that regionalism could include separatism in cultural matters and even in politics insofar as it did not threaten the integrity of the state. Separatism could imply the free and untrammelled development of a region like Siberia, without advocating its defection from Russia.<sup>249</sup>

After more than two years of investigation, the commission finished its examination and submitted its findings to St. Petersburg. It seems clear that the revolutionary transformations taking place in Russia influenced the government's position. The Governing Senate finally passed judgment on 20 February 1868, and after almost three years of waiting, the two leaders of the group learned their fates: Potanin received fifteen years of hard labor (later reduced to five after the intervention of P.P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskii), while Iadrintsev received ten years of penal servitude. Iadrintsev and Shchukin lost their property rights and suffered exile to Arkhangel province. At the request of the Governor-General of Western Siberia, both Iadrintsev

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<sup>248</sup> Krusser, *Sibirskie Oblastniki*, 104-107.

<sup>249</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 267-268.

and Potanin served their prison and exile terms outside Siberia.<sup>250</sup> Interestingly, the government released many regionalists for lack of evidence.

The Siberian circle in St. Petersburg epitomized the intellectual ferment of the capital during the 1860s. Throughout Russia, not merely in the capital, people discussed the nature of the Great Reforms and what they meant for Russia. The mentality of the Siberian students at the university was consistent with the mentality of the day—that the Russian state would solve the empire’s problems. As historian Norman G.O. Pereira has written: “[Regionalists] continued to believe that the central authorities would eventually acknowledge and appreciate the importance of Siberia, as well as its resources and materials, for the overall welfare of the country. That recognition would in turn lead to the repudiation of all government policies that discriminated against Siberia and kept the region in a subordinate and exploited position.”<sup>251</sup> Regionalists had pleaded with both the tsar and regional officials when it came to realizing their visions for Siberia; however, the Siberian Separatist Affair challenged the notion that the state was the prime mover for change in the empire.

The fact that Shchapov’s letters to Tsar Alexander II fell on deaf ears reinforced a growing mentality that the state has failed Siberia, but it was the Russian government’s refusal to extend *zemstvo* reforms to Siberia in 1864 that pushed members of the movement towards stronger action and that contributed to the writing of the proclamations “To Siberian Patriots” and “To the Patriots of Siberia.” These writings set up an early crisis for the regionalist movement. Members of the regionalist movement believed that *zemstvos* in Siberia would contribute to the socio-economic growth of the region, promote education, guarantee social

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<sup>250</sup> Svatikov, *Rossii i Sibir’*, 61. Potanin spent his period of exile in Finland.

<sup>251</sup> Pereira, *White Siberia*, 20-21.

welfare, and foster a stronger local government.<sup>252</sup> *Zemstvo* organizations in European Russia were the bastion of liberals and the nobility. At the center, government officials worried that the introduction of *zemstvo* institutions in Siberia would necessitate either the artificial creation of a Siberian gentry or the creation of peasant self-government in the region. Given the general socio-economic homogeneity within the region, regionalists believed that a Siberian *zemstvo* system would prove to be the most democratic and representative political institution in Russia. In the wake of the government's refusal to extend *zemstvos* to Siberia, the two proclamations emanating from the movement took a decidedly more radical tone. As Pereira has noted, the proclamation discovered in Irkutsk "ominously" declared: "We must have faith that in Siberia – a country populated by descendants of exiles, of the rebellious *streltsy* (musketeers), of the banished *raskolniki* (schismatics) ... the sacred banner of independence, freedom, and progress will be easy to raise! Remember that Siberia may be the first Slavic nation to achieve the great popular deed – a democratic republic."<sup>253</sup> Yet as Pereira also emphasizes, the regionalist program stopped short of separatism as it desired "a proper appreciation for their region's contribution to the state and a place as a full partner in a Russian federal union."<sup>254</sup>

They, like many liberal groups within the empire, believed that the Russian government sought to modernize Russia, and the Great Reforms represented a manifestation of that desire. The early 1860s found most liberals, like the regionalists, enthusiastic about the future. Many liberals pinned their hope for reform on the Russian government. Regionalists formulated theories about how the government could elevate Siberia to what they believed was its appropriate station within the empire. Dissatisfaction with the depth and breadth of the Great Reforms provoked protests throughout Russia. Protests among the students in St. Petersburg

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<sup>252</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia*, (1882), 363.

<sup>253</sup> Pereira, *White Siberia*, 21.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

prompted the government to close the university, sending many Siberian students back to their home region. Speaking early in the twentieth century, Potanin expressed his understanding of the importance of the Great Reforms to the intelligentsia of the 1860s: “The era of the ‘Great Reforms’ decided a number of issues in Russian public life and forced the Siberian intelligentsia to pay attention to the shortcomings of social life in Siberia, its educational backwardness, and its inferior position among the other areas of the empire.”<sup>255</sup> After returning to Siberia, regionalists sought to convince their fellow Siberians of the correctness of their views. Growing increasingly exasperated with their appeals to governmental reform falling on deaf ears, regionalists expressed their dissatisfaction by producing two key proclamations of regionalist theory—“To the Patriots of Siberia” and “To Siberian Patriots.” In the politically charged atmosphere of the mid-1860s, these proclamations prompted a strong reaction on the part of the Russian government.

The Siberian Separatist Affair represented a watershed for the regionalist movement, closing, as it did, the period of hopefulness and leaving regionalists skeptical of the ability or the desire of the tsarist government to reform the country. Even as regionalists argued that patriotism should not be confused with separatism, the Russian government branded the movement’s members as separatists who hoped to break Siberia away from the students. Once the commission handed down sentences that included lengthy periods of exile to members of the movement, the Russian government ceased to be the main object of regionalist appeals. As the regionalists took up residence at their various places of exile, they struggled with determining the next logical step for the movement. They had enjoyed the brief period of the reforms in St. Petersburg, and they had used that time to reflect upon the meaning these reforms held for Siberia. They debated about what Siberia and its people needed to enjoy the benefits of progress,

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<sup>255</sup> Potanin, *Oblastnicheskaiia tendentsiia v Sibiri*, 11.

and they promoted their ideas for Siberia through the press of the day. They discussed these ideas in St. Petersburg, and even one person associated with the movement put his ideas in a letter to Tsar Alexander II. Yet, they still found themselves confronted by the full force of a tsarist state that had, just a few years earlier, been the driving force for change within the empire. Governmental resistance to reform became a crisis for the broader intellectual movement in the Russian Empire that traditionally looked towards the tsar and his representatives to promote change within the empire. Regionalists had tended towards revolutionary democracy in their political outlook, and their movement suffered a setback similar to those experienced by other contemporary socio-political movements in Russia. Two key events outside of their control—the government’s decision to close the University of St. Petersburg and the government’s decision to prosecute regionalists in Omsk in 1865—had pushed regionalists in a different direction. They had found their voice, but their audience had changed. With the Russian government proving unreceptive to their pleas for reform in Siberia, regionalists, moving forward, had to find a new audience for their ideas.

### **3        A NEW LIKENESS AND A NEW IMAGE**

The closing of the Omsk Separatist Affair ended an intellectual period for the regionalist movement as well. Like many groups that had emerged during the transformative era of Russia’s Great Reforms, the regionalists possessed a limitless optimism that was simultaneously bound up within the intellectual mentality of the day. They believed that the intelligentsia, government bureaucrats, and even “the tsar emancipator” himself—Tsar Alexander II—would extend the reforms throughout the empire as a whole. As noted in chapter one, in broad terms regionalists tended towards a federalist vision for Siberia and thus focused on reforming Siberian society

rather than plotting revolution. From the movement's earliest origins in St. Petersburg to the crisis of the Omsk Separatist Affair, regionalists looked to the state—the great demiurge of change—to transform society. In the early 1860s, when the Russian government brought him to St. Petersburg to clarify comments he had made at the memorial service for the Bedna peasants, Shchapov articulated his regionalist vision for Siberia, not through the press, but through his letters to Tsar Alexander II. Shchapov advocated the decentralization of the Russian state, the extension of the zemstvo organizations to Siberia, the construction of regional councils, the distribution of local taxes for local needs, and the passage of any and all measures aimed at improving the intellectual, economic, and moral life of the region. However, the “tsar emancipator” received Shchapov’s ideas with suspicion, even noting that Shchapov should be watched closely.<sup>256</sup> As this nascent period for regionalism approached a moment of crisis and the regionalists found themselves the objects of searches, investigations, and criminal proceedings, they became disillusioned, forced to wake up from their Left Hegelian/Herzen-infused vision of the state as the vehicle of change. They thus sought new methods for achieving their goals of reform and development for Siberia.

Like both revolutionary and liberal democratic oppositional groups, members of the regionalist movement confronted the oppressive strength of Russian autocracy in the 1870s and 1880s and reconfigured their ideas to suit the reality of Russian society. Their brush with the power of the central government in 1865 sent many of the chief ideologues of regionalism into prison and exile, and the period of imprisonment and exile helped shape some members of the movement. Regionalists utilized the time spent on trial, in prison, and in exile in as profitable a way as possible. Iadrntsev utilized his house arrest in Omsk to study the exile system and the

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<sup>256</sup> Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik*, 52.



peasants of Siberia, ultimately developing ideas about both Russians and Siberians.<sup>257</sup> Moreover, while exiled in Archangel province, Iadrintsev further expanded his regionalist ideology, as he proved able to explore the relationship between metropole and provinces.<sup>258</sup>

Clearly, prison and exile helped shape members of the movement. Both Potanin and Iadrintsev emerged from prison and exile in the mid 1870s, but other members of the movement, as well as some of those simply associated with it, did not survive prison and/or exile. N.V. Ushcharov died in exile, as did Nikolai Semenovich Shchukin, who, along with Fedor Nikolaevich Usov, had served as a sounding board for Potanin's ideas prior to the separatist affair. While not directly associated with the movement, Shchapov, a man who had a significant amount of influence on the members of the regionalist movement, also died in the 1870s in Irkutsk in relative poverty. Unlike others, Usov survived exile (which ended the mid-1870s) and returned to a position within the Cossack units. He also maintained a very active role in the movement. While some of the old guard had left the scene, newer adherents made some significant contributions to the growing movement.

Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov from Tobolsk, Dimirti Mikhailovich Golovachev from Kuznetsk, and Petr Vasil'evich Vologodskii from the Yenesei Province all contributed to the movement in various ways. Adrianov, who had started in the St. Petersburg Medical and Surgical Academy but transferred to St. Petersburg University, followed the path of many regionalists. While studying at the university, he became acquainted with Yadrntsev and Potanin, who had both finished their exiles and returned to St. Petersburg. After earning his degree, he pursued studies in Ethnography and Archaeology, joining Potanin on expeditions to

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<sup>257</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Oblastnicheskie tendentsiia v Sibiri," in Adrianov, ed., *Sbornik k 80-letiiu dnia rozhdeniia Grigoriia Nikolaevicha Potanina*, 96.

<sup>258</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 161.

Mongolia, Altai, and Tannu-Urianhai.<sup>259</sup> Adrianov eventually served as editor of *Sibirskaiia gazeta* (*Siberian Newspaper*) and co-editor (along with Vologodskii) of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, two of the most important organs of Siberian regionalism. He also contributed articles to these newspapers and others throughout the region, including *Sibir'*.<sup>260</sup> While these newer members certainly contributed to the development of regionalism following the leaders' return from imprisonment and exile, Potanin and Iadrintsev continued to shape the movement.

The post-exile activities of both Potanin and Iadintsev reveal two contradictory developments within regionalism in the aftermath of the Omsk Separatist Affair. First, following the sentencing phase of the Omsk Separatist Affair, the regionalist movement stalled for a brief period, as much of the leadership served terms in prison and in exile, and Iadrintsev acknowledged that the separatist affair had dealt the movement a blow. Therefore, some internal weakening of the movement's leadership was to be expected. However, in a secondary development, Iadrintsev understood that the separatist affair had done much to popularize the regionalists' conceptions of Siberia's problems, conveying these ideas both to Siberia's educated public and to members of the Russian government.<sup>261</sup> Even though they served prison terms and periods of exile, Iadrintsev in particular and Potanin in more generalized terms emerged from exile with the dual goals of solidifying the ideological gains that regionalism made while further promoting the movement's vision of Siberia's problems and its needs.

For the period in question—from his return from exile in the mid-1870s until his death in 1894—Iadrintsev, thanks to the massive amount of work he produced, became the chief

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<sup>259</sup> M.A. Devlet, "A.V. Adrianov kak etnograf," from *Repressirovannye etnografy* Volume 1, D.D. Tumarkin, ed., (Moscow: Izdatel'skaia firma "Vostochnaia literature," 2002), 14-15.

<sup>260</sup> Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik*, 211-214. For a brief examination of periodical publications in Siberia, see Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, *Periodicheskaia pechat' v Sibiri: S ukazatelem izdaniia v 1918 godu* (Tomsk: Tipografiiia Tom. z. d. Makarovskii, 1919).

<sup>261</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 157; Also in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 31-32.

ideologist of regionalism. After his release, he came to Omsk at the invitation of the West Siberian Governor-General and worked in the Western Siberian Directorate for the next five years, until 1881. He then returned to St. Petersburg where he began publishing *Vostochnoe obozrenie*. Potanin, following his imprisonment and exile, embarked on scientific explorations in Central Asia with the result that his intellectual output concerning regionalism diminished somewhat. While he participated in the ideological debates within the movement and contributed to its growth between the mid-1870s and 1894, Potanin's role within the movement declined slightly while he focused on his scientific endeavors. Iadrintsev, however, sought ways to broaden regionalism's appeal.

In keeping with the concept of a federated Russian state adopted from Shchapov, Iadrintsev, in letters, encouraged Potanin and others to promote the idea of a federated system as an element of the movement's broader ideological platform. For Iadrintsev, every province needed to study its history and evaluate its current position within the Russian Empire if the inhabitants were going to realize the full potential of their respective regions. In one letter, Iadrintsev wrote, "I am saying that every group in Russia, by locality, has their own interests, their own lives, their own needs. The revival of these local groups is associated with the revitalization of the people entirely. ... What matters is that provincial newspapers and writers are unaware of provincial issues."<sup>262</sup> Clearly reflecting the deeper reliance on the growing mass media of the day, Iadrintsev argued that newspaper and journal editors in the provinces should be the ones to educate the public on provincial problems and show the people the connections between the provinces and the evolution of Russian society. The vitality of the region thus depended upon educating people—particularly the young people in both the center and in the provinces—about the importance of the provinces within broader society.

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<sup>262</sup> Iadrintsev quoted in Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 83.

Since Siberian development was not considered vital for the Russian government, and European Russians could not envision the region's development as important, regionalists had to try and generate an audience for regionalist ideas. In a broader appeal to the non-European areas of the Russian empire, regionalists argued that not just Siberia but other regions of the empire had the right to evolve in ways that fit their particular situations, whether it was environmental, cultural, or economic factors which shaped that development. Iadrntsev believed that opponents of a Siberian university either failed to or proved unwilling "to recognize the right of every human society to develop itself."<sup>263</sup> Previously, regionalists struggled to convince governmental officials of Siberia's importance, but the separatist affair, imprisonment, and exile had shifted the movement's focus, bringing regionalists to emphasize elevating consciousness within the region and fostering Siberian growth. They came to focus on a Siberian university as a means of educating an elite who could, in turn, teach Siberian youths about region's needs.

Iadrntsev believed that Siberian youths did not have the ability to process regionalist ideas. In his uncompleted autobiography, he lamented that the Omsk Separatist Affair had made it difficult to talk about the idea of separatism. Indeed, from 1865 well into the 1870s, only a handful of people broached the topic. However, the absence of discussion of separatism proved immaterial because, as Iadrntsev noted, the youths in Siberia found it "difficult to assimilate even the idea of patriotism," much less the concept of separatism or the ideas promoted by groups such as Populists, Marxists, or Socialists.<sup>264</sup> In practice—especially during the 1860s and 1870s—regionalism tended towards Populism (or perhaps vice-versa). Svatikov, quoting *Narodnaia Volia* (People's Will), said that the people had the right to land, the right to local autonomy, and the right to a federation, and these ideas certainly reflected Populist/regionalist

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<sup>263</sup> Iadrntsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1892), 600.

<sup>264</sup> Iadrntsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 157; Also in *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 31.

thought.<sup>265</sup> Likewise, Populist attempts to carry the movement's message to the people resonated with the leaders of regionalism, while the Siberian youths occasionally grasped aspects of Populism. Regionalists, however, saw Populism as a movement of the center, and as it became more revolutionary, Iadrintsev came to believe that it ran contrary to the regionalist vision for Siberia. For regionalists, the goal, then, came to center on the development of education rather than revolutionary action. Focusing on education would enable Siberians to glean the vital points of the regionalist program and to understand the importance of the region within the Russian Empire.

Both Iadrintsev (prior to his release from exile in late 1873) and Potanin published articles dealing with regionalist topics with the goal of preserving the movement as much as they possibly could. Upon completing their exiles, they met with one another, planning to return to St. Petersburg and to continue publicizing the needs of Siberia. Iadrintsev became the chief advocate of the movement in Potanin's absence, and, when he finally made his way back to St. Petersburg in 1874, he began publishing regionalist articles and promoting the need for prison reform in the St. Petersburg newspaper *Nedelia*.<sup>266</sup> Iadrintsev said, "Provincial issues continued to occupy me, and in *Nedelia* I published works pointing out the importance of provincial and regional revival," reiterating that a revival in the provinces was vital to a renaissance within the Russian Empire.<sup>267</sup> However, Iadrintsev also noted that the intelligentsia in the capital did not fully understand regionalist concepts. He even remarked that, initially, the editor of *Nedelia*—P.A. Gaideburov—had hindered his publications before becoming his (Iadrintsev's) "soul mate." Because the

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<sup>265</sup> Svatikov, *Rossiia i Sibir'*, 63.

<sup>266</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 162-164. Some of the works he published in *Nedelia* include "Sud'by Sibiri" No. 5 (1873), "Rezultat tiuremnoi reformy" No. 21 (1874), and "Kolossal'naia tiur'ma: Ocherk nashei shtrafnoi kolonizatsii" Nos. 42-43 (1874). For some information about Iadrintsev's return to St. Petersburg, see Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, chapter six.

<sup>267</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 165.

intelligentsia never really grasped the ideas of the regionalist movement, the capital, to Iadrintsev's way of thinking, represented "the most unfavorable soil to initiate a discussion of provincial issues," though he truly believed the problem important for Russia as a whole. Iadrintsev concluded that the intelligentsia of European Russia understood neither regionalist ideas nor the movement itself, and that explanation lay in the differences in mentality between the provinces and the capital. In an effort to bridge the gap in understanding between the capital and the provinces, Iadrintsev gravitated towards Populism in some ways. He believed that Russian Populism, which originated in the cities, could not be true populism unless it somehow managed to incorporate elements of the intellectual life of the provinces.<sup>268</sup> Regionalists such as Iadrintsev found themselves in a similar position. They had to reconcile their desires for reform in Siberia with the fact that their theoretical underpinning was developed in the intellectual milieu of Russia's center.

Theoretically, regionalism could develop by building upon a Siberian intelligentsia, but the movement emerged not in Siberia but through discussions in St. Petersburg because the region suffered from an underdeveloped intelligentsia. In order to build a foundation for the movement within Siberia, regionalists had to construct a local intelligentsia who did not move to European Russia for an education and then stay there. This proved a tall order, as, much to his dismay, Iadrintsev acknowledged that regionalism's federalist vision for Russia constituted a dream, as Russia was steadfastly a centralist country and would probably remain so for the foreseeable future. Historically, reforms and revolutions began at the center and trickled down to the provinces, but the intelligentsia in the capital, as Iadrintsev noted, did not really understand provincial issues and never properly grasped the ideas of the regionalist movement.<sup>269</sup> Therefore,

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<sup>268</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 165-166.

<sup>269</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 166.

regionalists sought to transform the movement into a unifying force that opposed the centralizing efforts of the Russian state. Developing the concept of Siberia and unifying the region behind that concept necessitated inculcating that regionalist vision among the masses. However, even Potanin understood Siberia as a purely geographical construct, and he therefore believed that it would be difficult to unify the masses on a vision of Siberia. As Potanin stated, “Siberia, with its vast territory, has no real unity among its parts among the popular masses, and unification happens only among the intelligentsia rather than among the masses.”<sup>270</sup> For Potanin, then, Siberia was better served through the unification of the intelligentsia.<sup>271</sup> The real questions for the movement were how could regionalism unify the intelligentsia and by what means? Ultimately, regionalist publications aided the movement as it sought to form a proper audience for regionalist ideas and a proper foundation among the intelligentsia, even as the members of the movement hoped to build patriotism among the Siberian intelligentsia.

Siberia’s reality complicated the regionalists’ task of building a Siberian consciousness focused on the needs of the people as perceived by regionalists. Regionalists claimed that they carried out their tasks in the name of the people, even though using “the people” as a blanket term for Siberians who had disparate interests and varied backgrounds was problematic. Regionalists had hoped to avoid that problem by looking at Siberia as a region that existed geographically. Potanin had previously claimed that no unifying factors existed among the peoples of so vast a territory, but he came to believe that the geography of the region contributed a potential unifying force. Because Siberia existed in a geographical sense, Siberians shared a common identity and common interests. For both Potanin and Iadrintsev, service to the region

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<sup>270</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 291.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., 292.

was interchangeable with the idea of service to the people. But getting the nascent Siberian intelligentsia to buy into the regionalist program for Siberia proved difficult.

After Potanin and Iadrintsev went into exile, they produced a series of articles urging the opening of a Siberian university, decrying the exile system, and calling for the extension of rights to Siberia. This marked the beginning of key relationships with Populists, particularly editors of such Populist newspapers as *Delo* and *Nedelia*. Both Potanin and Iadrintsev continued to publish articles following their return from exile, but Iadrintsev's experience with these newspapers left him disheartened. Populist editors initially refused to publish certain of his articles, leaving him firmly convinced that only a *truly* Siberian newspaper—one staffed by Siberians and one that focused on purely regional issues—could promote Siberian interests and foster its development.<sup>272</sup> Yet, as events turned out, Iadrintsev put his desires for a regional newspaper on hold temporarily, as his articles earned him the notice of N.G. Kaznakov, Governor-General of Western Siberia from 1875 to 1880. Kaznakov's attempts to work with Iadrintsev to better the region revealed that there existed at least one government bureaucrat who shared the regionalists' vision. Iadrintsev said that when he was introduced to Kaznakov in 1875, the new Governor-General exhibited some understanding of regional questions and that he had read works by both Iadrintsev and Naumov. At one point during this initial meeting, Kaznakov asked Iadrintsev, "Tell me, what can I do for Siberia?"<sup>273</sup> Iadrintsev later wrote in his autobiography: "I was delighted to have found an administrator who was so keenly interested in Siberian questions," and he informed Kaznakov that building a Siberian university should be a

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<sup>272</sup> Potanin, "Oblastnicheskie tendentsiia v sibiri," 99.

<sup>273</sup> Kaznakov quoted in Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 101; also Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 168.



goal if the region were to develop properly. Iadrintsev volunteered to produce a report on the main issues associated with the building of such a university.<sup>274</sup>

Ultimately, Kaznakov entrusted Iadrintsev with writing a report designed to convince the emperor of the necessity for a Siberian university. On the basis of Iadrintsev's rather convincing report (the tsar approved the establishment of the university in 1878), Kaznakov gave him a position on the governor's staff as a secretary on the committees on exile and peasant land settlement. Though Iadrintsev never really desired a political position, his position within the government gave him both time and opportunities to explore the region around Omsk and to theorize about society's ills and the possible solutions to the problems. While on the Governor-General's staff from 1875, Iadrintsev never came to believe that a governmental position could help him foster the requisite changes in Siberian society. In fact, Iadrintsev said prior to the separatist affair, "[Regionalists] considered the human word to be the best means for winning the battle against ignorance, for the creative ideas and for the procurement of human rights."<sup>275</sup> After just two years on Kaznakov's staff, Iadrintsev found that his belief had been reinforced by his experience, and he wrote to Potanin: "I am completely convinced that writing can be a thousand times more effective than administrative work ..."<sup>276</sup> Iadrintsev left the Governor-General's staff in 1881, to focus on the development of a Siberian press devoted to combating the problems faced by Siberian society.

While in the Governor-General's office in Omsk, Iadrintsev conducted ethnographic investigations in the surrounding region, ultimately producing several works on ethnography and geography, the most important being *Sibirskie inorodtsy: Ikh byt i sovremennoe polozhenie*.

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<sup>274</sup> Iadrintsev, "K moei avtobiografii," 168.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 153.

<sup>276</sup> T.M. Farafontova, "Iz bumag sibirskogo patriota: Materialy k biografii N. M. Iadrintseva," *Vostochnoe obozrenie* No. 188 (13 August 1902), 2-3.

Moreover, when Iadrintsev finished his five-year stint with the West Siberian Governor-General's office in 1881, he was on the cusp of two major events in his life: the completion of what would arguably become his most well known work—*Sibir' kak koloniia* and his return to St. Petersburg, where on 1 April 1882, he founded and became the editor of the St. Petersburg newspaper *Vostochnoe obozrenie*.<sup>277</sup>

In the twelve years between the establishment of *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and his death, Iadrintsev continued to develop a vision for Siberia based upon theories that had originated in the Siberian circle in St. Petersburg. For instance, the members of the Siberian circle envisioned Siberia as a colony and spelled out what constituted colonial status—settlement, lack of development, and autocratic policy towards the region. This represented the basic foundation of Iadrintsev's work *Sibir' kak koloniia*, in which he attempted to bring the regionalist vision for Siberia to a broader audience, letting the whole of Russia know that Siberia was not merely European Russia's "insignificant and voiceless region." Written to coincide with the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ermak's Siberian conquest and covering topics that included geography and climate, ethnicity and peasant society, and native groups and their plight, Iadrintsev's *Sibir' kak koloniia* sought "to dispel the prejudice and false notions about our east ...."<sup>278</sup> According to Iadrintsev, Siberians believed that a new period of "conscious life and [an] understanding of their role in the future" lay at hand. They were committed, Iadrintsev asserted, "to the development of their economic, physical, and mental powers." Furthermore, Iadrintsev contended that, the people of the region looked forward to a "new period in Siberian history" not governed by the old colony-metropole relationship with European Russia.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravocnik*, 148-149.

<sup>278</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (2000), 11.

<sup>279</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1882), 445.

For Iadrintsev, inaugurating a new period in Siberian history required the spread of the Great Reforms to Siberia. He declared, “Recently, some very prominent local needs and social needs have been put forward, which cannot be left unanswered in the public life of Russia. They consist of rights already enjoyed by the citizens of European Russia. Siberian society is waiting for the introduction of *zemstvos*, the new court system, the spreading of education, the guarantee of rights, and a better social organization.”<sup>280</sup> Iadrintsev sincerely believed that the spread of these reforms to Siberia would prove extraordinarily important because Siberia, for its entire existence, had had to deal with harassment, injustice, and confusion at the hands of the Russian government. The people deserved stability, and Iadrintsev hoped that the extension of rights to Siberia would strengthen its society. Iadrintsev argued that the situation Siberia faced could not continue. But as regionalists talked about Siberia’s needs, the region’s problems, and the solutions to those problems, they understood that the preeminent issue revolved around persuading Siberians collectively to strive for these goals. For regionalists, the problems were legion when it came to the formulation of the idea of what constituted a *Sibiriak*. Indigenous peoples of Siberia had never enjoyed considerations from the Russian state and they had never been properly acknowledged as an important group within Siberian society. Similarly, a nascent Siberian bourgeoisie had never had the opportunity to develop outside the colonial influence of European Russia. Regionalists, however, did not view this as a problem of regional development; they considered this a beneficial result of Siberia’s relative backwardness. As a group, the bourgeoisie could be bypassed along the path of Siberian development. Siberian youths showed that they did not always grasp the broader implications of regionalist theories. Potanin had argued that regionalism could potentially unify Siberia’s intelligentsia, but this group represented a small percentage of the region’s population. Thus, theories on how to construct a new Siberian

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<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

society were invariably intertwined with the very idea of what constituted a *Sibiriak*, while formulating a Siberian identity went hand-in-hand with the awareness of particular regional interests.

The separatist affair and trial in Omsk had leveled the charge of separatism at the regionalist movement, and although Potanin had argued that he alone raised the issue of separatism within the Siberian circle in St. Petersburg, claiming that he did so as a means of provoking discussion and raising interest in the region's particular problems, the commission ultimately branded regionalists as separatists.<sup>281</sup> Potanin asserted that the government had done so in spite of the fact that he and the regionalists "had never dreamed of separating Siberia from Russia."<sup>282</sup> Writing in 1908, Potanin claimed, "political separatism was left aside" in regionalist discussions after the separatist affair, as members of the movement claimed that patriotism towards their homeland colored their conversations and not political separatism.<sup>283</sup> According to Potanin, he and other regionalists had merely sought to make Siberians think about their problems and needs as regionalists conceived of them. By shining a light on Siberia's problems, regionalists hoped that they could make people aware of belonging to the region. Be that as it may, the regionalists' geographic construction of Siberia did nothing to repair the lingering fissures within the society.

Iadrintsev sought to develop a purely regional press that he hoped would unite the people of Siberia. While writing for *Delo* and *Nedelia*, he understood that Siberians needed their own newspaper, one staffed by Siberians, and in 1881, he returned to St. Petersburg where he launched *Vostochnoe obozrenie*.<sup>284</sup> However, Iadrintsev chose to publish his journal in St.

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<sup>281</sup> *Delo ob otdelenii Sibiri ot Rossii*, 300.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 345.

<sup>283</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 273.

<sup>284</sup> Bykova, et al., eds., *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo: Biobibliograficheskii spravochnik*, 149.

Petersburg in hopes that he could influence Siberian students who came to the capital to study. Although regionalists encouraged Siberian youths to stay in the region for their studies, many still came to the university at St. Petersburg, and Iadrntsev used his position in St. Petersburg to encourage them to return to Siberia. He told these students that it was important that Siberia had the teachers and doctors necessary to support the society.<sup>285</sup> Also, Iadrntsev provided some financial assistance to those Siberian students who needed money to continue their studies, on condition they return to Siberia. His presence in St. Petersburg also afforded some students and members of the intelligentsia the chance to attend the “Iadrntsev Thursdays,” where they continued the tradition begun by the Siberian circle in the capital during Iadrntsev’s own university days.

Also, Iadrntsev chose to publish his newspaper in St. Petersburg because it gave him the opportunity to petition the government whenever the censor’s pen threatened the newspaper’s content. Only after facing several inquiries from the government and being sued several times did Iadrntsev move the newspaper to Irkutsk, farther away from the eyes of the censors.<sup>286</sup>

According to Iadrntsev’s vision, *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, was organized around special regional topics and treated Russian or European matters only if they touched on Siberian affairs. He deemed anything else irrelevant. He recognized that such limitations would prevent wide circulation, but he saw this as a small price to pay for a newspaper that treated Siberian life and problems while simultaneously fostering the development of regionally conscious Siberian youth and intelligentsia.<sup>287</sup> Regionalists understood that the intelligentsia would be important in constructing a viable vision of Siberia.

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<sup>285</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrntsev*, 55.

<sup>286</sup> N. Levin, “Pamiati khoroshogo cheloveka,” *Vostochnoe obozrenie* No. 89 (15 July 1894), 3; Iadrntsev, *Sibir’ kak koloniia* (1892), 689.

<sup>287</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (6 February 1886).

Potanin said that the Era of the Great Reforms decided a number of issues in Russian public life, and as the regionalist movement evolved, Potanin hoped that the broader awakening within the Russian Empire would force members of the Siberian intelligentsia to pay attention to the shortcomings of social life in the region.<sup>288</sup> He argued that members of the intelligentsia must recognize their responsibility to the peasantry, stating that the intelligentsia had to assume a position of leadership in Siberia. According to Potanin, “a native intelligentsia, coming from the local peasantry, must put themselves in the sacred duty of service to the native peasants.”<sup>289</sup> The growth of a Siberian intelligentsia and the inculcation of regionalist ideas within this group presented one potential path towards regional development.

Within their geographical construction of Siberia, regionalists included everyone residing in the territory from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean. This meant reconstructing the vision of certain groups within Siberian society. For example, in *Sibir' kak koloniia*, Iadrintsev's analysis of the *inorodtsy* acknowledged that their fate within the broader history of the Russian Empire had not really received any attention. Moreover, his study of these people revealed how they had suffered from disease and struggled with malnutrition, drawing comparisons to the Native American groups of America.<sup>290</sup> For Iadrintsev, while all Siberians needed to enjoy the same rights and privileges that European Russians enjoyed, these native groups deserved basic rights first and foremost. Similarly, in *Sibirskie inorodtsy, ikh byt i sovremennoe polozenie*, Iadrintsev advocated equality for these groups, writing, “True knowledge teaches, impartially, concerns for any form of life, and it brings people together based upon their shared aspirations for life, happiness, well-being, and justice.”<sup>291</sup> Regionalists provided an inclusive definition in their

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<sup>288</sup> Potanin, *Oblastniceskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri*, 11.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1882), 86.

<sup>291</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibirskie inorodtsy* (2000), 274.

vision of a *Sibiriak*, apparently based on the belief that such would ensure a unified society. But other segments of Siberian society, such as the bourgeoisie, also had to be taken into account in any regionalist vision of a *Sibiriak*.

The Siberian bourgeoisie was effectively non-existent, but Iadrintsev and Potanin did not see that as a problem. Iadrintsev argued that the relatively small size of the Siberian middle class was a byproduct of Siberia's hobbled economic development; therefore, the Siberian bourgeoisie was not analogous to the bourgeoisie in European Russia. The small size and consequent weakness of Siberia's bourgeoisie meant that the middle class did not exercise the same level of power as it did in European Russia. Even though the regional bourgeoisie had been pushed into disadvantageous positions relative to Russia's state monopolies that were dominated by European Russians, the Siberian bourgeoisie, according to Iadrintsev, occupied a far better position than that of the peasants in the region. These Siberian merchants could afford to be the middlemen of a biased economic system because they would simply pass on the burden of higher prices to their customers, the Siberian peasants.<sup>292</sup> While they saw the potential for fostering a vision of Siberia by utilizing the intelligentsia, the youths, and the geography of the region itself, the regionalists had yet to determine how a regionalist Siberia should appear economically.

As much as they debated the tools of constructing a regional identity, regionalists, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, attempted to determine whether capitalist market development should continue within Siberian society or if regionalists should advocate transforming the region's economic structure. Potanin told Iadrintsev, "I would have wished that somehow you indulge in dreams—things that ought to indulge the local bourgeoisie: factory smoke and soot-covered palaces, whistling locomotives, policemen ... docks, and cargo, goods,

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<sup>292</sup> Iadrintsev to Potanin, 23 September 1873, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, eds. N.A. Logachev and Iu.P. Kozlov (Irkutsk: Izdatel'stvo Irkutskogo universiteta, 1988), Volume 2, 253-254.

boxes ...,” but both Iadrintsev and Potanin searched for paths towards Siberian development that lay outside the Russian Empire’s market economy.<sup>293</sup> Before they could determine which economic structure would best suit Siberia, regionalists had to identify the right group or the best social organization upon which they could pin their hopes for the future. Unfortunately, viable alternatives were quickly running out.

For regionalists, fostering the development of education, culture, and an intelligentsia followed their overall goal of helping the region evolve.<sup>294</sup> In fact, for Iadrintsev, the problems of Siberia stemmed, first and foremost, from ignorance. Lack of technical skills and Siberian isolation prevented the people from producing the manufactured goods they needed and, therefore, kept them economically tied to European Russia. This reinforced Siberia’s secondary status within the empire, as they were forced to purchase finished goods at exorbitant prices. However, regionalists saw some benefit in Siberia’s “backwardness” relative to European Russia. Many problems within European Russia in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, they believed, stemmed from the empire’s attempts to develop economically. Echoing once more some of the ideas of the Populists, they contended that Siberia’s *lack* of development meant that it had not confronted the problems of industrialization. Indeed, regionalists believed that if they could discover the correct path of socio-economic development, Siberia, by learning from other nations’ mistakes, could bypass these problems.

Binding the various elements, geographic, social, cultural, and economic into a viable path for Siberian development became a key goal for the movement, but other aspects of the regionalist vision for Siberia’s future required government intervention. Regionalists had already identified several long-standing needs for the region, but the most glaring need according to

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<sup>293</sup> Potanin to N.M. Iadrintsev, 11 July 1875, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 2, 174.

<sup>294</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, 7 April 1883.



Iadrintsev was a change in Siberia's colonial status. While the development of Siberia was intertwined with colonization, in terms of administration, Iadrintsev saw Russia's administration of the province as sorely inadequate at best and openly hostile at worst. The people could not appeal to the government. Most people were too ignorant to know how to petition the government, and even if they made an appeal, corruption and graft within the government prevented justice from being served.<sup>295</sup> In the minds of the regionalists, the Russian government's administration of Siberia had kept the region underdeveloped, trapping it in a perpetually colonial state. It did no good to compare Siberia to European Russia, Iadrintsev argued, but if one looked at the development of other regions that joined the Russian Empire at the same time as Siberia, then Siberia's backwardness became all the more glaring. Regionalists urged the Russian government to appoint local officials because they saw many of the administrative officials sent from European Russia as corrupt careerists uninterested in local needs. The best hope for transforming Siberian life was peasant self-government and a division of powers within Siberian administration.<sup>296</sup> This, however, represented only part of the puzzle for regionalists. Other long-standing needs—problems that regionalists had hoped to bring to the attention of the people since they first started holding discussions in St. Petersburg—had to be addressed as well. Yet, as the regionalists discovered through the separatist affair at Omsk, the central government was not the solution to the ills of the region. Even the General Government of Siberia could not offer any relief. In the minds of government officials in St. Petersburg, the region was so backward that non-Siberians had to be sent to the region to manage its affairs. Even the reforms implemented by Mikhail Speranskii, Siberia's most successful governor, could

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<sup>295</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1882), 384.

<sup>296</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Potrebnost' znaniia na vostokey: Po povodu uchrezhdeniia Sibirskaiia universiteta," *Delo*, Volume 10, Number 2 (October 1875), 62; Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1892), 634.

not arrest the mismanagement within the region.<sup>297</sup> Although some advances had been made by Count N.N. Murav'ev-Amurskii, who had had some success "in getting rid of the old staff of civil service officials, who considered Siberia a camp to be plundered ...," the regional government had typically been staffed with outsiders who had no knowledge of Siberia and no desire to learn about the region.<sup>298</sup> Governmental officials' lack of interest in the region simply reinforced the system of corruption and mismanagement. Also, ignorance among Siberians proved problematic, as many average people in the region simply accepted corruption and mismanagement as normal simply because they had never known good government.<sup>299</sup> Accordingly, regionalists recognized that part of the solution to the problems of Siberia was bringing to light the failures of the government and educating people on regional development, such as the how proper government should foster regional growth rather than plundering the area's resources.

For Iadrintsev and those of his ilk, the best solution to the problems plaguing Siberian society lay in the development of a local intelligentsia. They perceived that the lack of education in Siberia hindered regionalist plans for regional development, but they simultaneously acknowledged that any potential path towards creating a stable Siberian intelligentsia was fraught with difficulties. Kropotkin, in *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, commented that he had grown tired of Siberia because he desired an "intellectual life, and there was none in Siberia."<sup>300</sup> In his opinion, what little there was of an intellectual movement in Siberia tended to be weak and ill defined. For Kropotkin those members of the small Siberian intelligentsia who had

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<sup>297</sup> See Raeff, *Siberia and the Reforms of 1822*. Iadrintsev had many positive things to say about Speranskii, finding him devoted to educating the citizens, developing the region economically, fostering political activity, and generally bringing attention to Siberia's needs. See Iadrintsev, "Potrebnost' znaniia na vostoke," 39-42.

<sup>298</sup> Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Volume 1, 198.

<sup>299</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1892), 634.

<sup>300</sup> Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Volume 1, 252.

participated in “that great movement ‘to the people’” understood their responsibility to the peasantry, while another group within the Siberian intelligentsia focused on political matters. Members of this second group, Kropotkin believed, were on their way to becoming “brilliant university professors, or men of mark as historians and ethnographers ... .” They had come together with the hope “of carrying to the people education and knowledge in spite of the Government.”<sup>301</sup> Although Kropotkin saw no real intellectual life in Siberia, the region had the potential to develop intellectually, and regionalists would therefore have to utilize elements of Siberian society to develop a vibrant intellectual life, seemingly out of whole cloth. For regionalists, fashioning a Siberian intelligentsia would start with the development of Siberia’s educational system.

Iadrintsev feared that the youth of Siberia would continue their previous trends when it came to education, reinforcing the traditional brain drain from Siberia. Iadrintsev was one of the few students who received a gymnasium education in the region, even though he had not always enjoyed the experience.<sup>302</sup> While few Siberians could afford to send their children to school, the ones who could found that their children were more likely to leave Siberia for the capitals, while the few who returned confronted hostility.<sup>303</sup> According to Iadrintsev, the system of gymnasium education in Siberia had proven completely inadequate and thoroughly unsuited to the nature of life in Siberia and the needs of the region. Indeed, when Iadrintsev returned to Siberia, the largest cities in the region—Omsk, Tomsk, and Tiumen—could only boast populations of around 10,000 people each, and during Iadrintsev’s childhood, the educational system was grossly inadequate for the purpose of building an educated class in Siberia. The number of young Siberians who needed an education steadily increased in the second half of the 1800s, but a

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<sup>301</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>302</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 8-9.

<sup>303</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir kak koloniia* (1882), 398.

significant consequence of the intellectual drain on Siberia was the lack of an educated class to serve as teachers within the region.<sup>304</sup> Regionalists saw the Siberia's brain drain as part of the cycle that kept the region in an inferior position, and they agitated for a local university that could improve the intellectual life of the region. Regionalists came to believe that an educated class—one that understood Siberia's needs as envisioned by the regionalists—could help solve the problems of Siberian society. As such, a Siberian university was necessary to contribute to the emergence of an educated class for the region.

A university, according to Iadrintsev, would meet several of Siberia's needs. It would, he believed, alter the nature of life in Siberia by producing, first and foremost, educated Siberians who would understand the regionalist vision for the region. For Iadrintsev, the dismissive attitude of European Russians towards Siberians—that they were uncouth and ineducable—had been proven inaccurate by dint of Siberians' adapting to the region's environment, overcoming problems of existence in such harsh circumstances. Iadrintsev said that this showed that Siberians had practical intelligence, but they needed to move beyond practical intelligence.<sup>305</sup> He cited information collected by the Russian state, showing that in the Baltic provinces, one in every nineteen citizens was literate, but in Siberia, that number was one in 664. The Russian province of Finland had one gymnasium student for every 284 citizens; however, Siberia had only one student for every 1,100 citizens. To make matters worse, the region's gymnasiums were "based in the most squalid facilities ...," yet another indication that region had languished under European Russia's control.<sup>306</sup> In Iadrintsev's opinion, some teachers who taught in Siberia were simply too incompetent for schools in European Russia; therefore, a Siberian university was necessary because it could produce teachers capable of educating Siberians about the ills of their

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<sup>304</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1882), 47.

<sup>305</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (2000), 153-154.

<sup>306</sup> Iadrintsev, "Potrebnost' znaniia na vostoke," 47-48.

society while showing them the proper path of development. A Siberian university would also produce reform-minded officials who could govern the region and thereby eliminate reliance upon corrupt officials sent from European Russia. It would also keep the youth of Siberia home, where they could grow intellectually while simultaneously sinking their roots even deeper into Siberian society.<sup>307</sup>

Iadrintsev and Potanin both understood the pull of education and the intellectual life in the capitals. They both had left Siberia for those purposes. Others ventured to St. Petersburg, Moscow, or Kazan, surviving day-to-day on the good will of their fellow students.<sup>308</sup> In Iadrintsev's opinion, life in European Russia, while tempting, never really served a purpose for Siberians. Focused as he was on regional life and development, Iadrintsev believed leaving for an education St. Petersburg and staying in the capital served no purpose for the region. Iadrintsev, Potanin, and others returned to Siberia once they left the university, but anyone who abandoned Siberia for European Russia had to confront the same problems that he and Potanin had faced.<sup>309</sup> While in St. Petersburg as a student, Iadrintsev did everything he could to help those of his peers who wanted to return to Siberia, and when he returned to the capital later in life, his support for Siberian students continued. Building a Siberian university, or helping Siberian students return home, aimed to elevate the regional consciousness of Siberian youths, and regionalists appreciated the effect this could have for building regional consciousness for all of Siberia. However, such a path was precarious.

Regionalists had theorized about potential paths towards development, but they also understood that every possible avenue of development was fraught with difficulties. As

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid.

<sup>309</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Oblastnaia istoriia i oblastnoi istorik," *Vostochnoe obozrenie* Number 16 (18 April 1885), 1-3.

previously noted, regionalists saw the youths as one possible group upon which to build a regionalist-inspired Siberia, but Iadrintsev worried that Siberian youths never fully grasped regionalist ideas; they even found it difficult to comprehend the idea of Siberian patriotism. While they could serve as a possible foundation for the movement's future, the Siberian educational system had to be developed first and the intellectual life of the region needed time to develop properly before this could happen.

Regionalists also considered it possible to build Siberian society around socio-economic structures, but they questioned what form the region's economic development should take, whether economic independence based upon industrial production or regional development founded on the peasant *obshchina* (commune).<sup>310</sup> This economic debate among regionalists continued even as Russia's economy became more industrially developed, and regionalists feared that closer ties between Siberia and European Russia threatened undermine their goals for the region. One such example given in the previous chapter was the Trans-Siberian Railroad. While the railroad integrated Siberia into the cultural, economic, and political life of Russia, Iadrintsev suspected the motives behind its construction, certain that Siberia needed schools and manufacturing before it needed a railroad. Industrial and economic development in Siberia should precede the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Iadrintsev believed. In Iadrintsev's mind, utilization of the Trans-Siberian Railroad to flood Siberia with cheap manufactured goods from European Russia and the resultant increase in demand for Siberia's raw materials would force Siberia into becoming a perpetual colony of Russia.<sup>311</sup>

Regionalists also believed and build regional consciousness around an emerging Siberian intelligentsia, but Iadrintsev and Potanin recognized that the regional intelligentsia had proven

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<sup>310</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1882), 262.

<sup>311</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Bor'ba za Sibirskuiu dorogu," *Delo* Number 5 (May 1875), 106-109.

weak and ill defined. Potanin believed that the intelligentsia could serve as a means of unifying the region, but developing a purpose and a goal that would unite the intelligentsia represented only one step. Regionalists needed to construct a vision of the region that all Siberians could call their own.

From the outset of the regionalist movement, a geographical construct represented the simplest way to envision Siberia in the minds of its members. Siberians lived in a certain geographic area; therefore, everyone in this area should share a similar vision for the region. Regionalists' understanding of the consequences of Siberia's colonization owed much to Shchapov, who asserted that settlement to the east of the Ural Mountains and the concomitant blending of Russian peoples and native groups had created a diverse ethnographic entity that looked on people from other areas of the Russian Empire as "aliens." Therefore, much of the Siberian mindset and moral character had been shaped by the strenuousness of settlers' lives in the region beyond the Urals.<sup>312</sup> As the geographic construction of the region failed to attract a substantial number of adherents, regionalists sought alternative ways of building a vision for the future of Siberia.

Iadrntsev, Potanin, and others understood that they had to integrate various facets of Siberian life into their plan for the region's future if they hoped to create a vision that would resonate with Siberians. Shchapov had claimed that with no influx of new experiences, no sharing of thoughts, no books, and no educated people, the province remained essentially stagnant. Regionalists confirmed these consequences of Siberia's socio-historical development, but they hoped to look at Siberia's backwardness as a potential benefit rather than a drawback to colonization. As mentioned earlier, the drawbacks of Siberian backwardness were a matter of perspective. The region could benefit from its secondary status in the Russian Empire because

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<sup>312</sup> Shchapov, "Istoriko-etnograficheskaia organizatsiia ruskogo narodonaseleniia," 402-403.

that backwardness resulted from a lack of development rather than from problems that accompanied development. Iadrintsev fretted because Siberian society had been deprived of an educated class, lacked manners, and remained untouched by religious, philosophical, or civil ideas.<sup>313</sup> Publicizing these ideas as *problems* of Siberia through works the local press or public lectures, at least according to Potanin, had not motivated Siberians to strive for change.

Transforming these supposed problems into the benefits of relative underdevelopment became important for regionalists who had to take backwardness into consideration when formulating a regionalist program. As Regionalists confronted the difficult task of finding a way of fostering their vision for Siberia in the absence of an educated class, they had to look to extant elements within Siberian society that they could use to overcome the region's backwardness relative to European Russia, and Potanin believed that any lack of development could be overcome by utilizing the peasant *obshchina*. As with almost every political and social movement in nineteenth-century Russia, the peasant problem emerged as the key question demanding resolution.

Potanin remained certain that Siberia could thrive within the Russian state, so long as there existed some economic and cultural autonomy that would allow elements like the peasant *obshchina* to grow into its role as a potential unifier of the region. In his letters, he elaborated on the idea that a new Siberian society could be built on the foundation of existing socio-economic elements without encountering some of the problems that European Russia had found in the course of its development. Predating an argument that Leon Trotsky would ultimately develop as the theory of the advantages of relative backwardness, Potanin argued that as Siberia had yet to begin its path towards modernization, it had not made any mistakes. It would thus be easier to develop the *obshchina* as the foundation for a future Siberian society and identity. Potanin told

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<sup>313</sup> Iadrintsev, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri*, Volume 5, 82.



Aleksandr Serafimovich Gatsiskom that he had listened to the arguments between Gatsiskom and Iadrintsev concerning the school system. While he acknowledged the importance of developing the educational system of Siberia, Potanin came away convinced that the real task for the present (mid-1870s) should be providing for the protection and security of the *obshchina*. For Potanin, the study of its needs, an understanding of the barriers to its development, the realization of its needs, and the development of its autonomy were paramount.<sup>314</sup>

For Potanin, then, the evolution of Siberia had to be tied to the *obshchina*. According to historian Galina Ivanovna Pelikh, Potanin's conception of Siberian society followed an evolutionary path from basic rural farming, something he referred to as the patriarchal *obshchina*, through a kind of *obshchina*-based region within the Russian Empire, into a potential independent state still based upon the *obshchina* (*obshchina-gosudarstvo*). In Pelikh's analysis, the regionalists believed that Siberia, at least in the second stage of development, could thrive within the Russian state as long as the region were allowed the necessary economic and cultural autonomy. Pelikh, although she saw the possibility for an independent Siberian state built around the *obshchina*, remained unconvinced by the theory that regionalists wanted to secede from Russia.<sup>315</sup> According to her, regionalists focused first and foremost on Siberian development within the Russian Empire, and the *obshchina* played a key role in that evolution.

Iadrintsev and Potanin preserved the idea of Siberia as a geographical construct, and added to it a vision of Siberia as a blank slate. With the region unfettered by the imposition of ideas from European Russia, regionalists aspired to create a vision of Siberia from whole cloth, preferably by utilizing the *obshchina*. Geographically, the region stretching from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean enjoyed many benefits—natural wealth, mineral resources, and a favorable

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<sup>314</sup> Potanin to A.S. Gatsiskom, March 1874, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 2, 97.

<sup>315</sup> Galina Ivanovna Pelikh, *Istoricheskaia kontseptsia G.N. Potanina* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2006), 33-54, especially pgs. 43-45.

geographic position. These benefits were supplemented by what was missing from the society. Isolation from things that had hindered Russian development—serfdom primarily—meant that Siberia could find another path of development that took into account the importance of the Siberian *obshchina*.

Much like Potanin, Iadrintsev saw the *obshchina* as a viable path towards Siberian development, as the people who worked the *obshchina* had an equal share in the land and an equal share in its success, or productivity. In *Sibir' kak koloniia*, Iadrintsev followed Shchapov's theory about the *obshchina*, seeing it as a cohesive community with "a remarkable ability to conduct public affairs."<sup>316</sup> While it had an economic role in Siberia, the *obshchina*, according to Iadrintsev, could also foster intellectual development. In light of this, Iadrintsev said, "Improving the situation of the *obshchina* is the very first requirement for the Siberian region."<sup>317</sup> Not everyone, however, shared Iadrintsev's optimism that the *obshchina* could serve as the foundation for a future Siberian society. Writing about a Siberian *obshchina* a few years later, Populist theorist A.A. Kaufman argued that the Siberian *obshchina* differed radically from that found in European Russia. While Iadrintsev believed that the *obshchina* prevented rich peasants from taking too much money from poor peasants through charging exorbitant rents for land, Kaufman argued that the nature of the Siberian *obshchina*—one that did not repartition land in the same way as the traditional Russian *obshchina*—would not prevent exploitation.<sup>318</sup> So, in Kaufman's eyes, tying the future of Siberian society and economy to the *obshchina* could be problematic.

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<sup>316</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (2000), 86.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>318</sup> Aleksandr Arkad'evich Kaufman, "Ocherk obshchinykh poriadkov Ishimskogo okruga, Tobol'skoi gubernii," *Russkaia mysl'* XI (November 1890), 36-37.

Fostering Siberian progress by utilizing the *obshchina* came about because of the undeveloped nature of the *obshchina*. Potanin believed that the traditional Siberian *obshchina* had disappeared during the initial phase of Russia's colonization of Siberia. However, regionalists in the late nineteenth century saw clear elements pointing to the Siberian *obshchina*'s revival, allowing them to theorize about constructing Siberian society on the back of the *obshchina*. Potanin even told Iadrintsev that members of Russian communes could not be individualists, as they were trapped by the nature of communal agriculture, while farmers in Siberia were not constrained or controlled by members of the community and thus could develop freely. This meant, at least for Potanin, that a new Siberian society could be built upon the commune.<sup>319</sup> The agricultural development of the society could allow it to avoid capitalism. Moreover, Potanin worried that the Siberian *obshchina* might degenerate to the past where land repartitions took place as they did in European Russia. He told Iadrintsev, "The *obshchina* needs [to take] a new step—eliminating redistribution and moving from communal land ownership to a communal farm, but for that we need a high level of peasant intellectual development." Regionalists had "the power to arrange the ruins into the most perfect community." Potanin asked, "Why should we take the same path towards European civilization? Why should the old brick not be useful in the new building?"<sup>320</sup> For regionalists, a new Siberia should be built upon Siberian foundations.

Iadrintsev agreed with Potanin that Russia's colonization of Siberia had destabilized the *obshchina*, but he, too, believed it would ultimately triumph. Siberian freedom gave those who ventured to the region opportunities to succeed; therefore, the *obshchina* would ultimately

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<sup>319</sup> Potanin to Iadrintsev, 4-10 June 1872, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 96-97.

<sup>320</sup> Potanin to Iadrintsev, 1 August 1872, *Ibid.*, 119-120.

work.<sup>321</sup> Building the future of Siberia through the structure of the *obshchina* was vital because, even though they sought the support of students and the intelligentsia, Siberian peasants represented the best cultural exemplars of *Sibirnost'* that regionalists could offer. Much like Frederick Jackson Turner's argument that the frontier in the history of America helped to shape the American character, Iadrintsev, in a similar way, argued that peasants and former serfs who had come to Siberia from European Russia represented a special type. More rugged, more independent, and more enterprising than their Russian counterparts, Siberian peasants could be the backbone of a transformed Siberian society.<sup>322</sup> While the *obshchina* had started to revive during the mid-1800s, the limitations on the region—elements of feudalism and stringent governmental policies designed to keep Siberia in a colonial position—limited development. Iadrintsev theorized that the remoteness of the region, the lack of industry, and colonial domination from the center created special circumstances, ones that would allow the *obshchina* to perform a vital role in Siberian development.<sup>323</sup> Since it was built upon rugged, independent peasants, the *obshchina*, argued Iadrintsev, could be used to establish a more egalitarian society. "The *obshchina* can not only perform an economic role," Iadrintsev said (confirming Potanin's previous argument), "but it can also create an intelligentsia in the region . . . ."<sup>324</sup> Belief in the community reflected a level of populism in regionalist theory, but the idea of employing the *obshchina* to construct a viable alternative path for Siberian progress represented merely one additional step in the process of regionalism's ideological evolution.

While regionalists hoped they could foster Siberian agrarian/economic evolution by fostering the growth of the peasant *obshchina*, this theory represented a shift in regionalist

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<sup>321</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1892), 142.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid. (1882), 64-70.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., 295.

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 78.

theory. Regionalists spoke of the economic, intellectual, cultural, climatic, and geographic differences between European Russia and Siberia, but they needed a positive construction of the region rather than merely conceptualizing it as something different from European Russia. The task of finding some socio-economic structure within the society or some regional group (students, liberal intellectuals, etc.) upon which to erect a vision of Siberian development in a regionalist mold was fraught with difficulties. Regionalists believed that they could tie Siberian socio-economic development to the *obshchina* or *mir*. They understood, however, that as long as the region was governed from St. Petersburg, the goal of transforming the Siberian *obshchina* into a viable alternative for regional evolution would never make headway. They understood that the Omsk Separatist Affair had quashed any talk of separatism, but regionalists struggled to pinpoint ways of garnering increased authority for the region without running afoul of the central government. Regionalists believed that local political power and concerning Siberian affairs would ensure Siberian development.

In some respects, Potanin had been bothered by the label of separatist that the government had thrust upon regionalists in the wake of the Omsk Separatist Affair; he argued that the government proved incapable of distinguishing between patriotism for Siberia and political separatism.<sup>325</sup> Iadrintsev, however, claimed that he had learned to embrace the term “separatist” to a certain extent, but in his biography of Iadrintsev, Lemke wrote that his subject was not so much interested in Siberian separatism as he was about the extension of liberal reforms that would bolster regional growth and development.<sup>326</sup> In one instance, Iadrintsev wrote that newspapers “scream a patriotic chorus: Siberia for Siberians... Siberia is the Russian America,” countering these cries by asserting that Siberia’s future was tied to the Russian state:

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<sup>325</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 273.

<sup>326</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 200.

“Siberia is not a colony of Russia, but is Russia itself, not a Russian America, but a Russian province and must develop in the same way as other regions of the Russian state.”<sup>327</sup> Iadrintsev believed that colonization had successfully tied Siberia to European Russia, but that that should not preclude the evolution of regional authority. He argued that in a centralized Russian state, a small increase in local autonomy could never result in the region breaking away from the Empire, but that it would give Siberia a chance to grow.<sup>328</sup> For Iadrintsev, both Siberia and European Russia needed to get beyond the colony/colonizer understanding of the relationship before regional development could proceed.<sup>329</sup> The extension of the Great Reforms, particularly *zemstvo* reforms, to the region would ease it into a proper relationship with the center and would give Siberia the power to set itself on the path towards solving those problems engendered by the lack of development in the region.

When the Russian government enacted *zemstvo* legislation in 1864, the government specifically excluded non-European regions of the empire from this reform. Indeed, as the regionalist movement urged for the extension of reforms to Siberia, the Russian government had labeled it a secessionist plot. Almost ten years later, regionalists revived the idea that continued exclusion of Siberia from any kind of reform would only cause further damage, and they focused on the *zemstvo* as a necessary step for Siberian evolution. In *Sibir' kak koloniia*, Iadrintsev called for the introduction of a Siberian *zemstvo* and the extension of other reforms to Siberia, arguing that such would foster the development of regional government, giving people a say—and therefore a vested interest—in regional administration. An elected *zemstvo* organization for Siberia would also bolster the development of the schools in the region, as it would give

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<sup>327</sup> Iadrintsev quoted in Svatikov, *Rossia i Sibir'*, 89.

<sup>328</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1882), 708.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid. (2000), 168-170.

Siberians a say in educational progress.<sup>330</sup> Iadrintsev contrasted the introduction of the Great Reforms to European Russia with the continued exclusion of Siberia from any liberal reforms, asserting, “Siberian society is waiting for the introduction of *zemstvos*, the new court system, the spreading of education, the guaranteeing of rights, and a better social organization.”<sup>331</sup> Siberians such as Iadrintsev had waited a long time for signs of governmental reform.

For Iadrintsev, the attempts of Speranskii and others at reforming Siberian administration faltered because they failed to get to the root of the problem: no genuine local say in the solution of the region’s problems. Previously, the Russian government kept a close eye on regional officials, but the only attempts the government took towards reforming Siberian administration consisted of either replacing inept officials or keeping an even closer eye on regional administrators. This ignored the heart of the problem as understood by regionalists: the Russian government could never satisfactorily administer Siberia from far-away St. Petersburg. The capital was too far away to address problems in a timely fashion, and governmental policymakers in European Russia failed to understand problems unique to Siberia. Iadrintsev believed the proper course of action was the evolution of a system whereby local administrators could deal with problems without first consulting the capital. This, naturally, did not sit well with the central authorities in St. Petersburg, who constantly worried that truly regional governmental administrators could abuse their independent authority and reduce the power of St. Petersburg over and within the region.<sup>332</sup> Iadrintsev, however, believed that such a small amount of local administrative authority would not be a problem in a highly centralized Russian Empire.

As long as people perceived of Siberia as the Russian backwoods that only benefited from its relationship with the center, Iadrintsev remained convinced that the regime would never

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid. (1882), 363.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 445.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 363.

move forward and make changes necessary for its development. Absent any fostering of regional development by the center (a center that Iadrintsev saw as “dominated by the idea of centralization”<sup>333</sup>), regionalists had to base their cause on the advantages that Siberia had to offer while simultaneously highlighting the drawbacks of Siberia’s secondary status within the Russian Empire. If the regionalists’ desire to see Siberia brought into its proper place within the empire is taken as axiomatic, then various aspects of regionalism’s ideological development become understandable. For Iadrintsev, bringing *zemstvo* administration to Siberia represented just one step in the extension of “full rights of citizenship” to the people of Siberia. The goal of building up Siberian society remained the same, and the key to building up society began with changing Russians’ understanding of the region.

*Zemstvo* reforms, regional economic growth, and the fostering of a Siberian educational system would place Siberians on the same level of European Russians. A Siberian *zemstvo* organization, however, occupied a place of primacy in Iadrintsev’s theory of development, and he argued that the basic building block for such assemblies could already be found in the Siberian *obshchina*.<sup>334</sup> The two, working in concert, would be mutually reinforcing, but for Iadrintsev, the development of local *zemstvo* organs preceded other transformations, such as the construction of a railroad, for example.<sup>335</sup>

According to Iadrintsev the coming of a Siberian *zemstvo* would be a first critical step towards transforming the region, although the nature of Siberian society suggested that the nature of a Siberian *zemstvo* would differ from that of European Russia. For instance, the lack of large landowners in the region, according to Iadrintsev, would make Siberian *zemstvos* forces for democracy and equality in Siberia. Regionalists utilized their argument that the region was

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<sup>333</sup> Iadrintsev, “K moei avtobiografii,” 166.

<sup>334</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir’ kak koloniia* (1882), 444-445.

<sup>335</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*, 139.



essentially a homogenous blend of people with relatively few divisions in an effort to show how Siberian *zemstvo* institutions could be fairly free and democratic. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of regionalist theory was the argument that the predominance of peasants made for a relatively uniform society in Siberia.<sup>336</sup> As Siberia started to change in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, regionalists had to alter their theories.

Through the last quarter of the nineteenth century, as the Russian Empire enacted reforms designed to modernize its economy, Siberia, formerly the backwater of the empire, became more and more integrated into Russia's economic life. Small-scale manufacturing appeared in Siberia during the late nineteenth century, forcing regionalists to take this into account within their vision of a future Siberian society. When it came to Siberian industrialization, Iadrintsev acknowledged that the region had been wholly dependent on manufactured goods from European Russia because industrial development in Siberia paled in comparison to that in European Russia. Iadrintsev argued that Siberia must develop its own industry to compete with that of European Russia and to escape the region's colonial status.<sup>337</sup> The real debate centered on what kind of industry suited Siberian society.

Much as regionalists had pinned some of their hopes on the peasant *obshchina* because they detected certain benefits to underdevelopment, they also saw advantages in Siberia's nascent handicraft industry. Yet, as industrialization reached Siberia from European Russia, traditional Siberian craftsmen had been squeezed out of jobs. Iadrintsev and Potanin, starting in the 1870s, interpreted this as the beginning of a slow transformation in colonial economy, which threatened to change Siberia from agricultural production to industrial specialization. By the reckoning of Iadrintsev and Potanin, though, the level of industrial development was low.

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<sup>336</sup> Iadrintsev, *Sibir' kak koloniia* (1882), 65.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid. (1892), 244.

Iadrintsev worried that newly emerging industry in Siberia represented a type of industry imported from European Russia and subsequently imposed on Siberia. This kind of industry could tie Siberia to European Russia even more and hinder the growth of regional autonomy. Moving away from traditional handicraft systems towards an industrial economy worried regionalists because they hoped to build Siberia's future on traditional elements such as the peasant *obshchina*.

Regionalists hoped that other elements in Siberian society would contribute to the independent development of the region, but the region's increasing integration into the economic life of the empire threatened their hopes for independent development. The traditional handicraft system of Siberian villages, according to Iadrintsev, could provide a needed industry for Siberia. Because the region's handicraft system represented a preliminary stage of industrial development, Iadrintsev hoped that it could serve as a cornerstone in Siberia's industrial evolution. In this instance, underdevelopment served a purpose yet again, as Iadrintsev, like his Populist counterparts, argued that the factory system had not taken hold of Siberia's economy in the same way as it had taken hold of European Russia's economy, Siberia could bypass the problems of industrialization. Ultimately, Iadrintsev came to link the development of the Siberian handicraft economy to education—apprenticeship in schools, scholarships for training in rural handicrafts, creation of cooperatives of artisanal manufacturers, etc.<sup>338</sup> Each step proved vital, in Iadrintsev's mind, to fostering the development of a home-grown industry. This had the potential to prompt a split between Potanin and Iadrintsev, as the former urged the later at least to try and indulge the small Siberian bourgeoisie by painting a vision of the region's future

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<sup>338</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, "Kustarnye promysly v Sibiri i znachenie ikh," *Russkaia mysl'* Vol. 2, Number 10 (October 1881), 70-71.

where “factory smoke and soot-covered palaces” dotted the Siberian landscape.<sup>339</sup> Iadrintsev, however, held fast to his belief that the factory system as it developed in European Russia was thoroughly unsuited to a Siberia where both land and opportunities outside manufacturing were plentiful.<sup>340</sup> That did not prevent the migration of industrialization from European Russia, and this threatened regionalists’ hopes for Siberia’s independent economic development. Other aspects also threatened regionalist desires for development.

The importance of the Trans-Siberian Railroad has been mentioned, but the regionalist reaction to it has yet to be examined. Regionalists had mixed feelings about the railroad. The Populist tenor of Iadrintsev’s belief in the *obshchina* makes his opposition understandable, but he did not oppose the railroad so much as what it represented. While regionalists ostensibly supported the development of local manufacturing in order as a means of ending Siberia’s dependence on manufactures from Moscow and European Russia, for Iadrintsev, it was more important for Siberia to foster the development of artisanal labor and limited local industry. Regionalists recognized that the railroad would make it easier to transport cheap manufactured goods from European Russia to the region and to facilitate the transfer of mineral and material wealth from Siberia and would thereby threaten to stifle the growth of the region’s artisanal labor.<sup>341</sup> Much like Iadrintsev, Potanin opposed the coming of the Trans-Siberian Railroad because, as he argued, every region in the Russian Empire had the right to cultural, political, and economic autonomy, and the differences that existed in every region should be allowed to contribute to the overall development of the Russian Empire. Within Siberia, Potanin felt that regionalists had done too much work towards nurturing a Siberian desire for cultural and

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<sup>339</sup> Potanin to Iadrintsev, June 1873, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 174.

<sup>340</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, “Usloviia pri kotorykh voznozhno sozdanie ghashnoi promyshlennosti v Iuzhno-Ussuriskom krae,” *Sibirskaiia gazeta* (22 September 1885).

<sup>341</sup> Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev, “Bor'ba za Sibirskuiu dorogu,” 107-109.

political autonomy to allow the railroad to undermine those goals by tying Siberia even closer to the Russian state.<sup>342</sup> Regionalists saw capitalist development in the region along European Russian lines as a threat to regional development. They perceived problems in European Russia, and they did not want those problems transplanted into Siberian society. If the Trans-Siberian Railroad would force the pace of industrialization and capitalism in Siberia, it would also hasten the region into making mistakes that would threaten Siberia's development.

The Trans-Siberian Railroad, therefore, represented a change that Siberia did not need. Iadrntsev argued that Siberia demanded schools rather than railroads and asked, "Why should the railroad be such a panacea for all the ills?" With everyone talking about spending billions of rubles on the construction of a railroad as a necessary step for strengthening Siberia, why could they not envision spending money on public schools and technical schools to strengthen Siberian civilization? For Iadrntsev, these questions lay at the heart of the regionalist argument for Siberian development.<sup>343</sup> The coming railroad filled Iadrntsev with apprehension, because he worried that it would merely reinforce the traditional aspects of the relationship between colony and metropole: greed and exploitation. To Iadrntsev, the railroad became one more link in a chain aiming to tie Siberia closer to European Russia and make the goals of Siberian regionalism all the more difficult to accomplish.

The construction of the Trans-Siberian Railroad did more than threaten to destabilize the *obshchina* or the handicraft system of the region; it threatened some of the very foundational tenets of regionalism. While regionalists decried the colonial status of Siberia, they understood the railroad as a means to tie Siberia ever closer to European Russia and lock it into a secondary status. If they hoped to build a new Siberian society on the back of the *obshchina*, the *zemstvo*,

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<sup>342</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 266-267.

<sup>343</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrntsev*, 139.

and the traditional Siberian handicraft industry, regionalists had to break the institutionalized inertia that had emerged, binding European Russia and Siberia ever closer.

Breaking the ties that bound Siberia to the empire proved difficult. Regionalists had pinned their hopes on so many different ideas and groups that their ideology could be represented a hodgepodge of ad-hoc measures designed to confront challenges as they emerged. Fostering the growth of regional educational opportunities occupied regionalist thought well into the 1880s, as regionalists understood education as vital to the movement. They also saw education as key to cultural and intellectual life in the region, as the region's cultural and intellectual stagnation under a colonial administration had obstructed the emergence of any kind of social or cultural solidarity. Regionalists advocated a Siberian educational system as a means of promoting the evolution of a group of intellectual supporters of their own movement; they saw this as a way of fostering the overall flowering of the region.<sup>344</sup> Because a vital role in cultural change would be played by an intelligentsia educated in Siberia itself, the driving force for change would be a local university that could produce this homegrown intelligentsia.<sup>345</sup> All of this represents only one element of the reality with which regionalists grappled.

What regionalists constantly confronted during the 1870s and 1880s was how to deal with the myth and the reality. The reality was that members of the movement tried to convince their Siberian audience of the correctness of their conceptions of Siberia and Siberianness. However, their ideas represented preliminary thoughts on a Siberian identity. Once they attempted to advance their ideas, regionalists encountered a harsh reality, which revealed that their ideas were not always clear-cut. As they attempted to tailor their theories to suit reality, regionalists found it necessary to refine their ideas and to turn them into a strong foundation for

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<sup>344</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, (6 January 1883).

<sup>345</sup> Potanin to Fedor Nikolaevich Usov, 8 November 1864, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 70-71; also, Potanin to Usov, December 1864, *Ibid.*, 71-72.

their vision for Siberia. In the mid-1870s Populists attempted to carry their message to Russian peasants, and in doing so, they acted before they understood how and even if their theories fit reality in the countryside. Regionalists understood the failure and grappled with multiple questions in an attempt to tailor their theory to reality. Did they end up merely aping the Populists? Did they ever get past the theoretical discussions of Siberia and *Sibirnost'* and ultimately take action? When did they do this? Why? If not, why?

From the earliest origins of their movement, regionalists talked about the problems of Siberian society (basically, it being tied to Russia in an unequal relationship), and with the second phase of regionalist development, the regionalists sought ways to go about fixing the problems. However, they had to get the people of Siberia to understand their vision and work towards a Siberian destiny. They had worked on building a foundation for Siberian society, but before they could convince people that their understanding of both Siberia and *Sibiriak* were correct, Regionalists struggled to formulate a proper definition of these terms. While they had the example of the Populists, regionalists made similar mistakes by ignoring the complexity of Siberian socio-cultural reality, attempting to define Siberia through geography and *Sibiriak* as anyone living in this area. How could regionalists convince the people that their definitions of Siberia and *Sibiriak* were the correct definitions? If they could not convince the population of Siberia of the correctness of their views, where could regionalism possibly go from there?

In the period following the leadership's return from exile, regionalism evolved considerably, and the development of a truly regional press had done much to disseminate of the movement's ideas. The local press—Iadrintsev's *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, *Sibirskaiia gazeta*, and *Sibir'*—contributed to the propagation of regionalist ideas throughout Siberia. Also, several larger works by regionalists like Iadrintsev, Potanin, and others (particularly Iadrintsev's *Sibir'*

*kak koloniia*) fostered the spread of the regionalist message to Russia at large. However, the journals and major works published throughout the late nineteenth century did more than merely popularize regionalist ideas: they gave the movement a sense of cohesion as a socio-political phenomenon.

While Iadrintsev emerged as the chief theorist of the movement, Potanin's decision to focus on his expeditions to Central Asia took him out of the spotlight. As the letters of both men attest, while the two theorists parted ways somewhat in terms of their activities, they never lost touch with one another. They consulted and solicited advice from the other. Also, both proved capable of offering constructive critiques to sharpen critical analyses. In light of their close relationship, Iadrintsev and Potanin, during the 1870s, 1880s, and the early 1890s, managed to construct a realistic vision for Siberia's future that included both extant traditional and imminent modern socio-economic elements. Through the confluence of fostering a Siberian educational system, supporting the region's *obshchina*, imploring the extension of *zemstvo* reforms to Siberia, defending the region's traditional handicraft industry, and persuading Siberia's youth and nascent intelligentsia of the correctness of their views, regionalists laid a solid foundation for the future of not only their movement but the future of Siberia as well. Regionalists understood that realizing this dream would take time—both to promote their ideas and to convince the broad mass of Siberians to join them.

In works like *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson, emeritus professor of International Studies at Cornell University, considered the tasks involved in the construction of a national identity, summing up that construction as having a vision of the people and the tools to transform that vision into nationhood. Certainly, there existed elements of a nationalist idea in Siberian regionalism; however, if there happened to be a disconnect between aspects of

Anderson's deceptively simple conception of an imagined community and what regionalists hoped to accomplish with their movement it would be that regionalists had no vision of the Siberian people. Regionalists had the geographic understanding of Siberia, but their conception of the *Sibiriak* could be defined as "the people who happen to live in the geographical region between the Ural Mountains and the Pacific Ocean." There were few unifying cultural aspects within Siberia, thanks in large measure to the various ethnicities. Varied ethnicities meant that there were no unifying linguistic or historical aspects that might pull the people together. So regionalists had to focus on a group that could create and propagate the movement's idea of Siberia as a purely geographic construct. One must wonder whether they focused on conveying their ideas to the intelligentsia to guarantee that regionalist ideas would trickle down to the rest of society at large, or if they focused on the intelligentsia because that was the only group that regionalists believed could unify Siberia—as the only group that could and would actually embrace regionalist ideas.

Their close relationship meant that Iadrintsev and Potanin had many ideas in common. Much of what Iadrintsev put forward had first emerged through the discussions that he, Potanin, and others had either in St. Petersburg or through an exchange of letters. Potanin, like Iadrintsev, viewed Siberia's position within the Russian Empire as that of a colony, which put Siberia in a negative relationship with the mother country. He believed that European Russia sent only the bad things, living and dead, to Siberia while pillaging the good things from its Siberian colony. Potanin also understood the key tasks for regionalism until 1894 included finding an audience for regionalist ideas, advocating for increased local authority, and locating elements of the region's socio-economic life that could serve as a foundation for Siberia's future.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>346</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 291.



Iadrintsev and Potanin, the voices of regionalism, embarked upon somewhat divergent paths following their returns from exile, as Potanin, for the most part, focused on his scholarly investigations, conducting expeditions to Central Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, and China, and producing works that explored the ethnography and folklore of these areas. However, he continued to write articles on the nature of regionalism and corresponded with Iadrintsev about his writings on the subject. However, Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev clearly became the most vocal advocate of regionalism following the exile imposed in the wake of the Omsk Separatist Affair. For two decades, Iadrintsev wrote on the nature of Siberia's ills and the potential of both the region and its people. In remembering Iadrintsev's life and love for Siberia, Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov said, "From 1862, when he was twenty years old and the first lines of his writings appeared in print, to 1894, when he died, it is possible to say that there was not a day in which he did not live for Siberia, not ache for her, not write about her needs."<sup>347</sup> Whether through articles in *Nedelia* and *Delo* ("Shpiony i palachi: Iz byta ostrozhnykh i ssyl'nykh" ("Spies and Executioners: From the Life of Prisoners and Exiles"), "Potrebnost' znaniia na Vostoke" ("The Need for Knowledge in the East"), "Administratsiia v Sibiri" ("Administration in Siberia"), and "Sud'by Sibiri" ("The Destiny of Siberia")), longer works like *Sibir' kak koloniia* or *Sibirskie inorodtsy*, or his work as editor for *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, Iadrintsev's voice was the most important and the most recognized within the movement. Reality, however, set in once again, as Iadrintsev's death in 1894 triggered yet another crisis within the movement, thrusting Potanin into the position of sole leader of the regionalist movement.

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<sup>347</sup> Adrianov quoted in Dubrovskii, *Rozhdeniye v strane izgnaniia*, 107.

#### 4 FINDING THE MOVEMENT

Regionalism found itself forced in new directions by the shocking death of Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev in June 1894. From the mid 1870s, Iadrintsev had been the ideological voice of the movement. He had corresponded with Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin on the issues that affected regionalism, and he had published multiple works that served as invaluable sources of information for the movement. Iadrintsev's passing thrust regionalism into a crisis, as Potanin—who, after his return from exile, had focused his energies on scientific explorations in Central Asia, Tibet, Mongolia, and other countries—became the sole leader of regionalism by default. However, Potanin's outlook on life and on regionalism had suffered two significant blows during the mid-1890s. First, Potanin's wife took ill in August 1893 during an expedition to Tibet, dying the following month, leaving Potanin significantly depressed.<sup>348</sup> Then Potanin received the news of Iadrintsev's death, which plunged him into an even deeper depression. Iadrintsev's death, thus, represented a second blow. Writing to V.I. Semidalov in June 1894, Potanin confessed, "I envy his [Iadrintsev's] death. First of all, it was sudden, and hence there was no long suffering; in a telegram, it said he died suddenly. Secondly, the position of those who leave is always enviable to those who remain in the desolate room."<sup>349</sup> In a subsequent letter to Semidalov, Potanin declared, "The death of Nikolai Mikhailovich did not produce such a strong impression on me as the death of Adelaid Fedorovna. But the news about [Iadrintsev's death] left me so depressed that, for the whole week, I cried every night upon going to sleep. This unequal treatment may be due to the fact that, after my personal loss on the Blue River, the new grief was, for me, a new wound upon the old larger one."<sup>350</sup> Potanin's psychological

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<sup>348</sup> Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 14-16.

<sup>349</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 17 June 1894, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 253-254.

<sup>350</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 6 July 1894, *Ibid.*, 258.

disposition was one thing; the damage done to the movement's disposition, proved almost as catastrophic. Potanin and the other regionalists now had to navigate without Iadrintsev, who left regionalism with vague, uncertain political views and no clarity on how to accomplish its goals.

Potanin did not consider regionalism's political vagueness a weakness. Indeed, political vagueness and uncertainty characterized the general mood of the day in major Siberian cities like Tomsk, and Potanin, therefore, attempted to keep the politics of regionalism purposefully vague to appeal to the widest strata of Siberian society. In Siberia, no real distinction existed between various shades of political struggle or oppositional sentiment in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Mikhail Popov, himself a Social Democrat from Tomsk in the early 1900s, mentioned that most people proved amenable to the political views of the time from both radical groups in the region, such as the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (established in 1898) and the Socialist Revolutionary Party (established in 1902), and liberal groups, such as the Union of Liberation (established in 1903), without favoring any particular political ideology.<sup>351</sup> Analyzing the political situation in Tomsk at the end of the nineteenth century, historian N.M. Dmitrienko concluded that "Initially, political views of participants of secret circles and gatherings were undefined, and future liberals and socialists of various stripes learned the same alphabet of political struggle, sharing a general oppositional mood."<sup>352</sup>

While political groups existed as oppositional movements designed to strike at the tsarist regime, regionalists, particularly those who grouped around Potanin, remained generally averse to declaring an association with any particular political movement. Potanin believed that regionalism should stand apart from the shifting political currents. After Iadrintsev's death,

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<sup>351</sup> Vasilii Pavlovich Zinoviev and Ol'ga Anatol'evna Kharus', *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn' v Tomskoi gubernii v 1880-1919 gg.: Khronika* Tom 1. 1880-fevral' 1917 g. (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2013), 16.

<sup>352</sup> Dmitrienko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 166.

Potanin sought to deal with the most important issues related to the movement's vision for the region. First, Potanin had to deal with consequences of Iadrintsev's death, which had cast shadow over the movement. Writing to V.I. Semidalov in 1894, Potanin revealed his concern about how the people would react to the fact that Iadrintsev had committed suicide. He claimed that during their last meeting in St. Petersburg, Iadrintsev had complained about his state of mind, indicating that he faced serious psychological turmoil. Perhaps Potanin did not understand Iadrintsev's comment or dismissed its importance. In recounting the event to Semidalov, Potanin worried that his silence—perhaps perceived by Iadrintsev as Potanin's indifference—wounded him.<sup>353</sup> Potanin's guilt may have motivated his desire to frame Iadrintsev's life in a positive way. Indeed, Potanin resolved to produce an authoritative biography of his friend, and he began compiling Iadrintsev's letters, memoirs, and works in anticipation of writing a biography of the movement's ideological voice.

Potanin took several paths in an effort to highlight Iadrintsev's contributions to Siberia. In writing to Semidalov in August 1894, he revealed that a group in Irkutsk of people had asked him to design an exhibition dedicated to Iadrintsev's life for a local museum. Potanin expressed the hope that it would grow into something of a museum to Iadrintsev.<sup>354</sup> Also, Potanin collected as much information about Iadrintsev's life as he could, working with both his friends and his family members. Potanin collected letters from Nikolai Mikhailovich Shenkursk [a Kazan newspaper publisher] and diary entries from Maria Khrisanfovna Sventitskaia. Potanin gathered materials from Semidalov and from Kaleria Alexandrovna Koz'mina that he hoped to utilize in a biography.<sup>355</sup> Similarly, Potanin collected information from N.I. Naumov, who knew Iadrintsev from their shared studies in the Tomsk gymnasium and who provided Potanin with a letter filled

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<sup>353</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 22 June 1894, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 262.

<sup>354</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 2 August 1894, *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>355</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 30 June 1894, *Ibid.*, 257.

his reminiscences.<sup>356</sup> Understanding Iadrintsev's importance to regionalism, Potanin believed that the circumstances surrounding Iadrintsev's death represented a major problem for the movement. While Iadrintsev's position as the ideological leader of regionalism unified the movement, his death could see the movement break apart. Potanin sought to cast Iadrintsev's life in the best possible light. Gathering information, producing a biography of Iadrintsev, and elevating Iadrintsev to the status of martyr to the cause of Siberia represented an attempt to ameliorate some of the negative consequences of Iadrintsev's death while simultaneously giving regionalists a hero around whom to rally. He was concerned that he would be unable to produce the biography. Naumov proved willing to write the biography, but this prospect also worried Potanin. He even told Semidalov, "How I would like to restore [Iadrintsev's] nice image, as he was when he was 20-25 years old, before the Siberian reading public. But who will do that now? All those who knew him then have perished; only I have survived. I am a man without pathos, unable to do it, and Naumov, it seems, has never been in love with our friend."<sup>357</sup> One week later, after Potanin had received some material for a biography of Iadrintsev, he lamented in another letter to Semidalov, "[I am] characterized by less tact and flair, and I stand too close to the deceased [to produce a biography]."<sup>358</sup> Even though Naumov concerned Potanin with his desire to produce a biography of Iadrintsev, he produced a shorter work on their time in the Tomsk gymnasium.<sup>359</sup> Perhaps somewhat dissatisfied with Naumov's remembrances, Potanin appealed to Mikhail Konstantinovich Lemke to produce a book dedicated to Iadrintsev's life.<sup>360</sup> This work, which was finally published only in 1904, would serve as the standard regionalist

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<sup>356</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 21 September 1894, Ibid., 269-270.

<sup>357</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 22 June 1894, Ibid., 262.

<sup>358</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 30 June 1894, Ibid., 257.

<sup>359</sup> Nikolai Ivanovich Naumov, "N.M. Iadrintsev v Tomskoi gimnazii," *Sibirskogo sbornika* Number 4 (1896), 1-16.

<sup>360</sup> Lemke, *Nikolai Mikhailovich Iadrintsev*.

interpretation of Iadrintsev's life and the key biography for those hoping to become familiar with the movement. While Potanin sought to find ways to rally the movement, he also struggled to overcome the psychological setbacks that had hindered him since his wife's death.

Potanin's psychological mood suffered two significant blows with the deaths of both his wife and Iadrintsev, and it took some time for him to show signs of recovery. In January 1895, while still in St. Petersburg, Potanin, in a letter to D.A. Klements, declared, "I have certainly changed for the better, but I have not yet come to the point where I can keep this steady [*rovnyi*] mood. I was ill in body—it was not just the spirit that suffered." Once he recovered physically and psychologically, Potanin pushed forward with some of his studies, ultimately saying that he "passionately" wanted to return to Irkutsk in anticipation of the revival of academic life in Siberia.<sup>361</sup> While under Iadrintsev's aegis, regionalism reached its ideological high-water mark. Under Potanin's leadership, at least initially, the movement found itself disunited. While he hoped to inject new life into the movement, Potanin understood that so many of the movement's old guard had died: Shchukin, Shchapov, Shashkov, Usov, Potanin's wife, and Iadrintsev.<sup>362</sup> Potanin proved to be physically, psychologically, and morally sapped during the second half of the 1890s. Potanin traveled in an effort to wrap up some of his scientific investigations on the "eastern hypothesis"—including trips to Moscow and Paris in 1897. By the time these investigations were concluded, Potanin had yet to work on preventing a rift within the regionalist movement.<sup>363</sup> For the first few years after Iadrintsev's death, Potanin's scientific investigations took precedence, and he did not have the time to deal with divisions that had

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<sup>361</sup> Potanin to D.A. Klements, 24 January 1895, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 282-284. It appears to have been an accurate prediction, because Potanin wrote about the revival of academic life in Irkutsk to Lidiia Parmenovna Leceovich, particularly concerning the growth of the educational system for the women of Irkutsk. (See Potanin to L.P. Leceovich, 23 September 1901, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 42.)

<sup>362</sup> I.A. Aizikova and E.A. Makarova, *Tema pereseleniia v Sibir' v literature tsentra i sibirskogo regiona Rossii 1860-1890-kh gg.: Problema dialoga* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2009), 160.

<sup>363</sup> Potanin to V.G. Korolenko, 12 February 1896, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 295.

started to emerge. Potanin emerged from the intellectual doldrums only after he had completed his scientific investigations, had accepted the role of editor for a new Siberian journal (*Baikal*), and had moved to Irkutsk to become the journal's editor. He also became the head of the Eastern Siberian Department of the Russian Geographical Society.<sup>364</sup> This recovery took a significant amount of time. Even though he had taken steps to become engaged in the intellectual life of the movement again, the path towards full and active engagement proved a rocky one.

The fate of *Vostochnoe obozrenie* presented Potanin with a looming question, as something had to be done with the main organ of the movement. In a letter to Semidalov from July 1894, Potanin acknowledged as much. After committing himself to keeping the journal alive, he even pondered whether he should lead the newspaper himself. Ultimately, however, he met with Smidalov and Nadezhda Fedorovna, the aunt of Iadrintsev's wife (Adelaida Fedorovna Iadrintseva had died in 1888) who had taken effective control of the journal upon Iadrintsev's passing. In another letter to Semidalov, Potanin repeated that, although Nadezhda Fedorovna was "leaning in favor of selling *Vostochnoe obozrenie* for 10,000 rubles," no final decision would be made until further consultation had occurred.<sup>365</sup> In the end, Ivan Ivanovich Popov, a political exile and revolutionary Populist living in Irkutsk, assumed control of *Vostochnoe obozrenie* from Iadrintsev's heirs. Popov had worked as an editor of the newspaper while it was still under Iadrintsev's control, and once he assumed control in his own right, an editorial in the paper stated that it would "continue in the same way and keep the same principles which were adopted by its founders. It will respond to all of life's questions, but most of all, it will devote itself to Siberia."<sup>366</sup> Under Popov's guidance, *Vostochnoe obozrenie* increased circulation until, by the

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<sup>364</sup> Editors' Introduction, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 5; Obruchev, *Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin*, 235-236.

<sup>365</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 2 August 1894, *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 263.

<sup>366</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie* (30 October 1894).

Revolution of 1905, the newspaper had about 20,000 subscribers. Unfortunately, the paper, at least in Potanin's eyes, did not maintain the same dedication to Siberia's, and before long, tensions between Popov and Potanin emerged.

As *Vostochnoe obozrenie* continued to publish articles devoted to regionalist ideas, once it came under Popov's aegis it began a slow move towards a liberal/Populist orientation, and that served to drive a wedge between Potanin and Popov.<sup>367</sup> Sold to Popov in mid-1894, by the end of the year *Vostochnoe obozrenie* had started to publish information not directly related to the needs of Siberia. Writing to Semidalov in November 1894, Potanin said, "Here we are as unhappy with the recent issues as you—long columns of Russian chronicles and two sections detailing the interests of Belgian workers, with which it is necessary to acquaint the reader." Later in the letter, though, Potanin gave Popov a little leeway, saying, "I still believe in Popov, and if now *Vostochnoe obozrenie* pales [in comparison to when it was edited by Iadrintsev], it is because he cannot spare the time and the resources."<sup>368</sup> In the course of debates with Potanin over the nature of the paper, Popov insisted that *Vostochnoe obozrenie* should adopt a general character rather than trying to focus on Siberian interests exclusively. This approach resonated with readers, as the circulation of the newspaper increased. Yet, Potanin remained dissatisfied with the generalized turn in the content of *Vostochnoe obozrenie*. Following the 1905 Revolution, Potanin reiterated his concern, writing in *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri* that the paper's shift away from regional topics towards producing generalized articles discussing Russian and European topics weakened the regionalist message. Soon after Popov took over the newspaper, it came under the editorship of the political exile V.V. Dem'ianovskii—a Populist who had organized revolutionary groups in the Trans-Baikal region of Russia. In that short time, Potanin lamented,

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<sup>367</sup> "Vostochnoe obozrenie," in *Sibirskaiia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, Tom 1, *ot A do Zh* (Novosibirsk: Zap-sib. otd., 1929), 513-514.

<sup>368</sup> Potanin to V.I. Semidalov, 8 November 1894, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 279.



*Vostochnoe obozrenie* had shifted dramatically from strictly Siberian interests to a multitude of topics that concerned neither Siberia nor Siberians. During Dem'ianovskii's tenure, P.G. Zaichnevskii, an exiled revolutionary socialist, became the principal officer and chief voice of *Vostochnoe obozrenie*. According to Potanin, "Zaichnevskii led the newspaper into a narrow party direction; he turned it from an organ of Siberian regional interests into an organ of the party to which he belonged in Russia. Siberian questions disappeared from the newspaper; together they turned the attention of Siberians to long stories about Belgian workers. The newspaper's content did not accommodate the needs of Siberian readers as Iadrintsev understood them."<sup>369</sup> Potanin wanted a regional paper that, like the *Vostochnoe obozrenie* of old, focused on the problems, the needs, and the goals of Siberia as he and other members of the regionalist movement understood them. While Potanin kept working on issues related to the regionalist movement as they cropped up, the role of *Vostochnoe obozrenie* in the movement had shifted. It occasionally focused on regional issues (Potanin congratulated Popov on publishing an article dealing with the native question in *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, telling him that this question still needed to be pushed out of the shadows<sup>370</sup>), but the newspaper under Popov continued to gravitate towards general news stories that adopted a liberal/Populist viewpoint on more and more issues. *Vostochnoe obozrenie* lost its appeal to Potanin as an organ for the regionalist movement, and he came to believe that only a new journal or newspaper could, once again, shine a light on regionalist issues.

While he refused to take the helm of *Vostochnoe obozrenie* following Iadrintsev's death, Potanin was not averse to publishing or editing a newspaper, and by the turn of the twentieth century, he saw a clear need for a newspaper devoted to regional issues. When Ivan Ivanovich

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<sup>369</sup> Potanin, *Oblastniceskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri*, 35-36.

<sup>370</sup> Potanin to I.I. Popov, 5 August 1894, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 4, 265.

Popov received permission to publish a new newspaper in Irkutsk, he offered the editorship to Potanin, who began to prepare for the task of once more bringing regional interests to the press. It took until 1901, however, for the possibility of this new regionalist newspaper to take shape. In an August 1901 letter to M.V. Zagoskin, Potanin expressed hope that *Baikal*—the new newspaper headquartered in Irkutsk—could reverse a trend he had noticed in Siberian newspapers:

Our Siberian newspapers are all [oriented towards] daily news; their articles are volatile and of instantaneous value; and after reading them, they are immediately forgotten. It is necessary to have long articles in newspapers; it is necessary to have historical and economic treatises, long stories, and novels. It is possible to respond to this need in *Baikal*. I would like to contribute to the coverage of Siberian History and determine the characteristics of the Siberian population.<sup>371</sup>

Potanin pushed the date for the first issue of the newspaper back to 1 November, as he called on friends to submit works. Potanin must have known that his position at the paper was unstable, for in a letter to Nikolai Mikhailovich Mendel'son in early October 1901, he wrote,

*Baikal* is going to be released on the first of November. I hope that you will not leave me without support and send something for the first issue. [Tasia Mikhailovna] Farafontova, who came to help me, was horrified by the empty editor's portfolio. She scolds me and rebukes me for not taking measures to collect material. But I dare not ask my friends to come into work, not knowing if I will be able to print what they give me ....<sup>372</sup>

Unfortunately, Potanin never got the opportunity to publish a single issue of the newspaper.

Popov's vision for *Baikal* clashed with that of Potanin, and thus, as the owner of the newspaper,

Popov pulled Potanin from the editorship just as the latter prepared to release the first issue.<sup>373</sup>

Popov wanted *Baikal* to mirror *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, which sought to bring together people of

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<sup>371</sup> Potanin to M.V. Zagoskin, August 1901, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 38-39.

<sup>372</sup> Potanin to N.M. Mendel'son, 4 October 1901, *Ibid.*, 42-43.

<sup>373</sup> Potanin, "Oblastnichestvo i *Vostochnoe obozrenie*," 2. There is some information showing that Potanin's prior political activity, his arrest, his conviction, and his imprisonment had come to the attention of the Special Section of the Police Department, and that was a good enough reason to make Popov uncomfortable with leaving Potanin in as the editor of *Baikal*. Writing from Krasnoyarsk in early 1902, Potanin made everything official by renouncing his editorship of *Baikal* in a letter to Popov. (See Potanin to Ivan Ivanovich Popov, 30 January 1902, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 48.)

various progressive political backgrounds and to give them general news stories. Potanin wanted *Baikal* to focus on strictly regional issues. As events turned out, the clash between Popov and Potanin grew into an even deeper chasm after the 1905 Revolution.<sup>374</sup> Still, the disagreement never represented a fundamental rift in the nature of regionalism so much as it did a clash of styles between these two men.

The episodes surrounding the evolution of *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and Potanin's dismissal from his editorship of *Baikal* represented two examples of the key problem facing regionalists following Iadrintsev's death: finding a proper outlet for their ideas. As noted, Potanin sought a newspaper that could publish the movement's ideas without mingling those ideas with general news from Russia, Europe, and the world. Potanin also feared that Siberian newspapers would turn towards political expression rather than the expression of pure regional interests. In the wake of his disappointments over *Vostochnoe obozrenie* and *Baikal*, Potanin looked elsewhere for an appropriate outlet for regionalist ideas. The search led him to Tomsk and close cooperation with local liberals and their strong and growing newspaper—*Sibirskaiia zhizn'*.

Looking to escape some of the problems that had plagued him following his removal as the editor of *Baikal*, Potanin left Irkutsk for Krasnoyarsk at the end of 1901, looking to rest there before moving to Tomsk, where he finally settled in mid-1902.<sup>375</sup> Although the setting was different, regionalism's status remained unchanged. In December 1901, some seven years after Iadrintsev's death, Adrianov wrote to Potanin, lamenting the status of the movement. "The idea of regionalism," Adrianov wrote, "is totally dissolved—vanished as an intelligent group of Siberians in the surging mass of intellectuals of Siberia. I myself hardly know to which god to

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<sup>374</sup> This deeper split found its way into Potanin's *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri*, which was published in the wake of the 1905 Revolution.

<sup>375</sup> Potanin to I.V. Palibin, February 1902, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 52; Potanin to Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Klements, 16 November 1902, *Ibid.*, 60.

pray.”<sup>376</sup> The decision to move to Tomsk marked the beginning of a new, revitalized period in Potanin’s life.<sup>377</sup>

By the time Potanin settled in Tomsk, he was almost seventy years old. Described as “Externally wizened, of short stature, with a gray beard ... he could be mistaken for a poor tradesman or a retired middling officer,” Potanin proved an active and enthusiastic participant in the intellectual activities in the city.<sup>378</sup> After years adrift in the intellectual doldrums, Potanin threw himself into the intellectual life of Tomsk, finding himself, as he had in St. Petersburg in the 1860s, “at the center of a social movement in defense of Siberian interests and, at the same time, in the center of the cultural and educational activities of the Tomsk intelligentsia.”<sup>379</sup> Specifically, he became a leader in several intellectual and cultural organizations, including the Society for the Care of Primary Education.<sup>380</sup> This association prompted Potanin’s deeper involvement within the cultural and intellectual life of the city. Writing to Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Klements in November 1902, Potanin expressed interest in working for the museum society.<sup>381</sup> Eventually, Potanin would help reestablish the Museum of Applied Knowledge, would help elevate the status of the Dramatic and Artistic Societies, and would contribute to the development of the Siberian Student Circle and a Siberian Regional Union. All the while, Potanin continued working on regionalist theory, elaborating on the previous theories and tailoring them to the specific problems of the new century.

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<sup>376</sup> Adrianov to G.N. Potanin, 7 December 1901, *Dorogoi Grigorii Nikolaevich*, 158.

<sup>377</sup> Tomsk was an ideal location for Potanin. The city had grown to well over 60,000 people, had become the only real academic center east of the Urals with the opening of the Imperial University in 1888, had emerged as a key administrative center, and had developed an active cultural and intellectual life. For Potanin, the diversity of the city and a ready outlet for regionalist ideas proved irresistible.

<sup>378</sup> Dmitrienko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 157.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>380</sup> Potanin to Petr Ivanovich Makushin, 1 October 1902, in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 58-59.

<sup>381</sup> Potanin to Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Klements, 16 November 1902, *Ibid.*, 60.

Potantin's efforts to find a suitable outlet for regionalist theory were complicated by the constantly evolving political currents in turn-of-the-century Russia. First, Potantin's steadfast belief that regionalism should be a pan-Siberian concept meant that just any publication would not do, while his belief that any attempt to tie regionalist ideology to a particular political ideology could threaten the integrity of the movement meant that members had to cultivate close relationships with publishers but not so close that they could undermine the movement's unity. Upon his arrival in Tomsk in 1902, Potantin found himself in the midst of an extraordinarily active political, social, and academic community that sought to revive public life. The friends with whom Potantin surrounded himself reflected some of the diverse intellectual interests in the city. The diversity of intellectual and political interests is revealed in the names and activities of his circle of acquaintances. Several of Potantin's closest friends during this period included members of the local Socialist Revolutionary party (S.P. Shvetsov, N.V. Sokolov, A.T. Bychkov, and others) and faculty members at the university and the technical institute in Tomsk (such as E.A. Zubashov, V.A. Obruchev, A.V. Witte, M.I. Bogolepov, and others whose liberal political views aligned with his own). He also became acquainted with the merchant Petr Ivanovich Makushin through his association with the Society for the Care of Primary Education. These close contacts gave Potantin and other regionalists opportunities to publicize regionalist theory through the publications *Sibirskii vestnik* (*Siberian Gazette*) and *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* (*Siberian Life*).

The publishers of *Sibirskii vestnik* (the full title was *Sibirskii vestnik politiki, literatury i obshchestvennoi zhizni*) had already worked closely with regionalists. Coming out for the first time in May 1885 in Tomsk, *Sibirskii vestnik* published information on the social, political, and cultural life of Tomsk, and Potantin published an article in the newspaper in the late 1880s. While *Sibirskii vestnik* could work well with regionalists, the newspaper, however, attracted

controversy—including closure for several months in 1888 for violating censorship regulations. In 1893, V.P. Kartamishev, the publisher and official editor of the newspaper, was prosecuted and found guilty of violating censorship regulations and sentenced to eight months in prison. When the local wing of the newly formed Socialist Revolutionary Party took control of the paper in the summer of 1903, the editors of *Sibirskii vestnik* began publishing articles critical of the Russian government. The newspaper's political affiliation and the editors' attacks on the government in the wake of the October Black Hundred Pogrom in Tomsk during the 1905 Revolution (specifically, the editors published several articles that exposed the governor's complicity in the pogrom) prompted the government to ban the newspaper in late 1905.<sup>382</sup>

While *Sibirskii vestnik* never had the circulation of *Sibirskaia zhizn'*, the editors' decision to publish stories of local importance and regionalist cooperation with the editors show how the members of the movement proved willing to work with members of various political parties in order to popularize their ideas. Potanin had published in *Sibirskii vestnik* in the late 1880s, and he had a good relationship with people on the newspaper's staff. On 9 November 1904, Potanin told Mar'ia Georgievna Vasil'eva, a poet from Barunai with whom Potanin had corresponded since 1901, that he would pass her works to the publishers of *Sibirskii vestnik*. "I do not go along with the editors in some important points for me," Potanin told Vasil'eva. Potanin continued, to say that the people at the newspaper, "if not my associates, are still my friends."<sup>383</sup> Potanin's collaboration with *Sibirskii vestnik* paled in comparison, however, to his working relationship with *Sibirskaia zhizn'*.

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<sup>382</sup> Vsevolod Mikhailovich Krutovskii, "Periodicheskaia pechat' v Tomske," *Gorod Tomsk* (Tomsk: Izdanie Sibirskogo T-va Pечатnogo Dela, 1912), 296-297.

<sup>383</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin to Mar'ia Georgievna Vasil'eva, 9 November 1904, from *Sibirskaia starina* Number 10, Issue 15 (1995), 17.

Starting its life in 1894 under the name *Tomskii spravochnyi listok*, *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* was published and edited by local entrepreneur Petr Ivanovich Makushin for several years before it ultimately evolved into *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* in 1897. *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* represented one of the most important publications in Siberia, and its wide circulation made it an important newspaper for regionalists as well. Makushin had established the Society for the Care of Primary Education in 1882, and through that institution, he and Potanin began a close working relationship. Similarly, other regionalists, most notably Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, worked closely with the editors of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*. Potanin eventually served as the editor of an illustrated supplement to the newspaper between May 1903 and December 1904, before a conflict with Makushin prompted Potanin to break temporarily with the newspaper. By the time of the Revolution of 1905, *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* had a circulation of more than 15,000, making it one of the most popular publications in Siberia. During the course of the 1905 Revolution, though, *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* evolved into an unofficial organ for the Constitutional Democrat organization in Tomsk. Yet, regionalists continued to contribute regularly, and Potanin's collaboration with the periodical proved the most successful and longest in his lifetime.<sup>384</sup>

From the time he arrived in Tomsk, Potanin began publishing articles in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* that revolved around regionalist issues. In his first significant article, "Est'-li zemtsy v Sibiri?," Potanin examined the possibility of Siberia developing *zemstvo* institutions as a precursor for self-government. He reinforced previous regionalist arguments that the rapidly advancing socio-political status of the Siberian people required increasing local authority. While some people looked at a Siberian *zemstvo* as an impossibility, Potanin believed the time right for *zemstvo* reform in Siberia. According to Potanin, the Russian government showed its support of and its

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<sup>384</sup> I.V. Vaganova, "G.N. Potanin i gazeta 'Sibirskaiia zhizn'": Grani sotrudnichestva," in *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* Number 2, Issue 14 (2011), 83.

confidence in the regions of European Russia by introducing *zemstvos* to these areas in 1864.

Potanin wrote: “We are ready in every way to support this confidence. Outdated forms of social order usually hold power in a hidden way; however, history shows many examples where the expansion of freedom is accompanied by the appearance of unexpected and abundant talents and virtues.” Potanin believed that Siberians had the talent and the virtue that merited the extension *zemstvo* reforms to Siberia. Potanin continued:

Those who talk about the absence of *zemstvo* leaders in Siberia do not take this fact into account. To say that there are no people in Siberia with a desire for social activities means not to see what is being done around you. One has only to look at the activities of Siberian intellectuals concerning public education. Also, although they are accused of indifference to education, there are many people among the peasants who, by their own initiatives, build schools, organize rural libraries, and so on.<sup>385</sup>

This represented the beginning of a lively relationship between Potanin and *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, and it was a relationship that continued through Potanin's editorship of the illustrated supplement, the publication of his memoirs in serialized form between 1913 and 1917, and the final crisis for the paper, after which the Bolshevik government permanently closed the paper in late 1919, accusing it of spreading anti-communist propaganda.<sup>386</sup>

While regionalists had found an outlet for the movement's ideas, divisions within the movement engendered by Iadrintsev's death had yet to be mended. An intellectual division stemmed from various members' economic visions for the region. However, the evolution of Russian political parties around the turn of the twentieth century fostered a growing gap between

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<sup>385</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Est'-li zemstvy v Sibiri?,” in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 253 (20 November 1902), 1.

<sup>386</sup> For some other works, see, “Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri,” *Sibirskiiia zhizn'* Nos. 28, 30, 41, and 65 (20 May, 23 May, 6 June, and 6 July 1907); “O grazhdanskikh pravakh,” *Sibirskiiia zhizn'* No. 269 (16 December 1908); “Fal'sifikatsiia obshchestvennogo mneniia,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 277 (12 December 1910); “z Istorii intelligentnoi Sibiri,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* Nos. 30, 33, and 35 (8 February, 11 February, and 13 February 1911); and “Intelligentsia i pechat' Sibiri,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 40 (17 February 1913) are just a few articles by Potanin that deal with Siberian life and regionalist theory. His memoirs can be found in multiple issues of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* (seventy-four issues, if my count is accurate). A list can be provided, if necessary.



Potanin and the regionalists who surrounded him—those who wanted to keep the movement separated from political activity and party associations—and those regionalists who wanted closer political relationships.

The emergence of political parties in Russia meant that Potanin and his regionalist counterparts had to adapt regionalism so that the movement could maintain contact with liberal and other political groups without getting too close and thereby diluting the potency of the regionalist message. This delicate balance proved difficult to strike. Socialist Revolutionary idealization of the peasantry and the peasant commune, for example, mirrored Populism to a certain extent and offered a viable ideological alternative to regionalism.<sup>387</sup> This meant that regionalists who wanted to participate actively in the political life of the country found themselves torn between the regionalism and the emerging political parties, especially the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

At its heart, the division within regionalism represented a rift between those regionalists who espoused the traditional liberal element (such as Potanin) and those who embodied a neo-Populist trend within the movement (such as Ivan Ivanovich Popov). Popov and those regionalists inclined towards the neo-Populist/Socialist Revolutionary mentality believed that Siberia held tremendous opportunities for Russians willing to venture east, and that these opportunities could be found in the peasant commune. This did not represent a departure from regionalism *per se*, as Potanin had argued earlier that the commune could serve as the foundation of a new Siberian Society; however, as regionalism faced a significant challenge to adapt its ideology to changing circumstances in the region at the turn of the century, this economic debate threatened the movement.

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<sup>387</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 289.

Approaching the turn of the twentieth century, some members of the movement still believed that the peasant commune would serve as the foundation for Siberian society. Popov, in an editorial from *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, wrote, “We believe neither in the mission of the *kulak* (wealthy peasants) nor in the mission of capitalism to make socialized laborers in the agricultural industry.... In Siberia, we see how larger communes disintegrate into smaller communes, but they never transform into purely homestead ownership [because basis of the commune] is deeply rooted in the soul of every Russian peasant’s view on land, and this consciousness will never go away....”<sup>388</sup> According to Popov, Russians who would come to Siberia would find the peasants of the region striving to nurture the development of the Siberian commune, and by the end of the 1800s, the members of this Populist trend in regionalism believed that the commune had approached a level of maturity necessary that would allow it to serve as the foundation a new Siberian society.

Within this neo-Populist wing of the regionalist movement, the debate of whether the Siberian commune should be allowed to grow organically or the pace of communal development should be forced consistently preferred organic growth. Aleksandr Arkad’evich Kaufman, a German-born, Russian political economist who specialized in questions of the commune, land tenure, and colonization, saw the evolution of the commune in the late 1800s as a slow, gradual process, whose transition happened in such an organic fashion in Siberia, that it would not be necessary to pass laws or apply administrative pressure to help the commune spread.<sup>389</sup> Popov and the regionalists who favored a neo-Populist ideology agreed with Kaufman’s interpretation,

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<sup>388</sup> Ivan Ivanovich Popov, “Sud’by kapitalizma v Sibiri,” *Vostochnoe obozrenie* No. 133 (10 November 1896), 2.

<sup>389</sup> Aleksandr Arkad’evich Kaufman, *Krest’ianskaia obshchina v Sibiri: Po mestnym izsledovaniiam 1886-1902 gg.* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia P.P. Soikina, 1897), 1-2.

and they worried that forcing the pace of communal development would foster the stratification of the peasantry.

Natural growth would permit the commune to grow into the foundation of a future Siberian society. “Siberia is the country of communal land,” Popov argued, “[and] the potential of the commune begins in land relations on different grounds, but the existence of the agricultural commune throughout Siberia is unquestionable. ... Land management projects of Siberia (of the Irkutsk Governor-General and particularly under the Ministry of Agriculture and the State Property Commission) make the existence of the commune a foundation of future land regulations ....”<sup>390</sup> Forcing the pace of growth in the commune could bring about the stratification of the peasantry as part of the overall economic evolution of Siberia, however, and peasant stratification tended towards capitalist rather than socialist development in the countryside. Neo-Populist regionalists fought against forced growth within the commune, believing that only the organic growth of communal agriculture represented the correct path for development.

Stratification of the peasantry presented a problem for regionalists who had lobbied for the construction of Siberian society based upon the commune because it offered a level of equality for the peasants. However, according to Popov, even though Siberia had not had to fight obstacles to development like those of European Russia and other agricultural countries, Siberian agriculture had to face certain problems also encountered in European Russia. For example, Popov said, “We do not deny the presence of the kulak in the Siberian village, but it is possible that his importance is incomparably less than that of the kulak in the villages of European Russia. There is a struggle with them here as in European Russia.” Popov went on, saying that

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<sup>390</sup> (Author simply listed as “A.” As editor and publisher of the paper, Popov would, like Potanin, occasionally use pseudonyms when writing his articles.) “Rol’ obshchiny v zemleustroistve,” *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, No. 116 (5 October 1894).

Siberians were committed to the creation of smaller communes rather than to individual homestead ownership. In Popov's mind, the power of the Siberian commune would prove capable of surviving a capitalist onslaught. The Siberian commune was "deeply rooted in the soul of every Russian peasant's views on the land, and this consciousness will never disappear."<sup>391</sup> Regionalists worried that forcing the pace of development in Siberia could create problems, and by the turn of the century, they had to face the reality of capitalist development and stratification in the region, and while they railed against these as destroying traditional elements of village life, they were forced to acknowledge their existence in the Siberian commune. When looking at the regionalist emphasis on the commune, it becomes obvious that traditional elements within regionalism mirrored the Socialist Revolutionary viewpoint on the commune and capitalism.

According to the Socialist Revolutionaries, capitalism represented an alien economic system that the Russian government had imposed on a traditional peasant society. The Socialist Revolutionaries' economic vision for Russia mirrored the regionalist conception of fostering handicraft and artisanal systems of production in Siberia. Regionalists continued to push their ideas forward in an effort to deal with the changing economic conditions in Siberia. For regionalists, Siberia at the turn of the century stood at the boundary of handicraft production and capitalist production. Any increasing integration into the broader economic and industrial life of Russia would push Siberia over the brink. While the members of the regionalist movement who leaned towards neo-Populist/Socialist Revolutionary interpretation believed that the commune would prove import to Siberia's future, more liberal members of the regionalist movement—such as Potanin and those who surrounded him—argued that the growth of the region would be better established upon capitalist elements. Regionalism had to come to terms with the increasing

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<sup>391</sup> Popov, "Sud'by kapitalizma v Sibiri," 2.

integration that the Trans-Siberian Railroad brought to Siberia, so some members of the movement hoped to harness capitalist development and channel it into the regionalist vision for Siberia.

In order to secure Siberia's future, the capitalist development of the region had to occur through the oversight of local political organizations, which meant that the proponents of liberal regionalism gravitated toward the development of *zemstvo* institutions in Siberia. By the late 1800s, however, the logic behind *zemstvo* reforms for Siberia proved multifaceted, containing economic, educational, and political elements. First of all, liberals within the regionalist movement believed that the *zemstvo* could foster economic development by protecting native industries and overseeing the emergence of a factory system within Siberia.

A Siberian *zemstvo* would provide local administrative support to the traditional handicraft industries in the region, but rather than merely propping up the handicraft industries, Potanin and other liberals within the movement believed that legislation could be used to foster the development of capitalism in Siberia *through* these handicraft industries. An editorial from *Vostochnoe obozrenie* declared, "In Siberia, there are a lot of sore spots and sensitive issues. One of these issues will surely develop significantly in coming years ... the question of extending to Siberia factory legislation and the introduction of factory inspection." Liberal regionalists believed that local industry could develop and support the region over European Russia, especially if a Siberian *zemstvo* would be allowed to oversee industrial development. "Roused from sleep by the locomotive whistle," wrote Mikhail Nikolaevich Sobolev, a liberal member of the Department of Political Economy at Imperial Tomsk University, "Siberia begins to recover quickly from its slumber, and, with the assistance of obliging 'bearers' from the domestic industrial centers of Russia, appears, with firm steps, to be entering the path of capitalist factory

production ...”<sup>392</sup> In hoping to develop Siberian industry, some regionalists argued that Siberian capitalists should open themselves to investment from foreign entrepreneurs who would prove more enthusiastic than Siberian or Russian entrepreneurs. These people would be able to push Siberian development ahead of not only traditional handicraft industries or European Russian enterprises.<sup>393</sup> Fostering the growth of capitalism in Siberia appeared as a contrary trend in regionalist theory, but it did not necessarily qualify as a contradictory element in regionalism if it presented as another justification for the development of institutions of self-government for Siberia.

Regionalists continued to uphold the *zemstvo* as a necessary step for Siberian economic development. I.I. Sukhanov, a teacher from Tobol’sk, argued that only by electing a *zemstvo* could the people enjoy a good local life and bring the “bulk of local issues into the mainstream of modern requirements.” The completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad brought the European Russian factory system to Siberia and simultaneously prompted a crisis. Sukhanov believed that only local self-government—the *zemstvo*—could “prevent the inevitable crisis in the economic life of the people”—a crisis where industrialization had followed the railroad into the region.<sup>394</sup> As much as liberal regionalists saw an economic need for *zemstvo* reform, in the late 1800s such reform also became intertwined with educational advancement for Siberia.

The system of education within the region continued to be a central problem for the regionalist movement. When the East Siberian Governor-General’s Office explored the possibility of a Siberian *zemstvo* in 1898, it concluded that the general level of education was not high enough to support such a council. Similar circumstances surrounded the convening of a

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<sup>392</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, No. 65 (22 March 1900).

<sup>393</sup> M. Sobolev, “*Ekonomicheskaiia rol’ inostrannykh kapitalov v Sibiri*,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* No. 234 (29 October 1899), 2.

<sup>394</sup> I.I. Sukhanov, “*Tobol’skaia pis’m*,” *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, No. 23 (30 January 1900), 2.

special meeting in Siberia that opened legal discussions for *zemstvo* institutions in Siberia.<sup>395</sup> After their success in establishing the Imperial University in Tomsk, regionalists focused on education for the masses. In *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, an editorial from the late 1890s declared: “Life has developed new forms and put forward a new challenge—the challenge of educating the masses. The school and the book: here are our weapons in this affair.” Following the Governor-General’s assessment, regionalists redoubled their efforts to foster the development of schools and libraries in the region. Liberals within the regionalist movement saw the continued weakness in the region’s educational system as a reason for bringing *zemstvo* reforms to Siberia. They believed that weakness in Siberian education represented a symptom of Siberia’s political backwardness, and one way to remedy that weakness was to give Siberians local authority over the educational system.

The regionalist demand for local self-government in the form of a Siberian *zemstvo* provided the key to understanding the debate over education in the late 1800s and early 1900s. An 1899 article from *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* said, “The case of public education in Siberian villages stands in worse condition than in the villages of European Russia. It is understandable. There is no *zemstvo* in Siberia that, in Russia, does an enormous service to the development of public education.”<sup>396</sup> A front-page story in *Vostochnoe obozrenie* claimed, “Siberian schools are insufficient in number, Siberian medicine is bad ... [What is needed] is solid support and an organic connection with the population that only the *zemstvo* can give.”<sup>397</sup> This was the same time that Potanin poured his efforts into the Society for the Care of Primary Education in Tomsk in an effort to elevate the general level of education in the city. Even with continued efforts

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<sup>395</sup> V. Soldatov, “Vozmozhno li zemstvo v Sibiri?,” *Vostochnoe obozrenie* No. 291 (11 December 1902), 2.

<sup>396</sup> “Zemstvo kak faktor razvitiia gramotnosti i uchrezhdenii obshchesvennogo prizreniia,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* No. 48 (3 March 1899), 1.

<sup>397</sup> *Vostochnoe obozrenie*, No. 63 (21 March 1899).

towards strengthening the Siberian educational system, however, Potanin remarked, as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, “[H]ow great the gulf is between the mass and the Siberian intelligentsia.”<sup>398</sup> The general level education, much like other aspects of the socio-cultural life in the region, languished under central authority; therefore, liberal members of the regionalist movement came, by the turn of the twentieth century, to focus their activities on *zemstvo* reform as the panacea for Siberia’s ills.

Liberal regionalists argued that if Siberia were to develop successfully, the region required a *zemstvo*, as the tsarist regime’s administration of local affairs held certain regions of the country back, keeping them in an underdeveloped state. In “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” Potanin asked the probing question, “What can Russia expect if Siberia is turned into a self-governing [region],” arguing, “It has long been established that the main features of Siberia—the lack of nobility, serfdom, and traditions—are still alive in the metropolis. Siberia is the paradise of men. The democratic structure of Siberian society contained within itself some threat to the noble classes of Russia, who look askance on Siberia.” This paradise of men would gain self-government and would do so even though the ruling class of Russia resented the idea that there was greater political freedom in Siberia.<sup>399</sup> The plea for regional self-government fell on deaf ears, however, and although the attempts of the late 1800s to convince the tsarist regime to establish a Siberian *zemstvo* never materialized, members of the movement continued their efforts, which found renewed life during the political and social upheaval of the Revolution of 1905.

The question of Siberian autonomy had reemerged with demands for *zemstvo* reform in the late 1890s and early 1900s, but regionalists had to frame autonomy in different ways in order

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<sup>398</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Zemskaia reforma v Sibiri i inorodtsy,” *Sibirskii vestnik* No. 185 (8 September 1905), 2.

<sup>399</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 289.



to come to terms with evolving reality at the turn of the century. Because the gap between the population taken broadly and regionalism writ small was so large, regionalists discussed autonomy in ways that would appeal to the local intelligentsia. While Shchapov had theorized about the geographical difference of Siberia as a means of fostering independent development for the region, and Potanin, Adrianov, and other regionalists continued their work on the question of ethnographic difference based upon the geographical difference, focusing on unifying the Siberian intelligentsia behind the regionalist vision. Potanin and others argued that autonomy was necessary and logical for the region; however, he and other regionalists linked the movement to particular kinds of autonomy, such as cultural, economic, and political autonomy.<sup>400</sup> In the evolving political circumstances in late Imperial Russia, this kind of mentality clashed with the Kadets, who argued for the unity of the empire. Potanin countered that Russia should not be broken up into several areas based on either ethnography or economy because conditions varied so widely throughout the empire. The focus should be on developing local finances with a local legislative assembly to disburse local funds and on cultural autonomy.<sup>401</sup>

The intellectual divisions over the shape of economic development in Siberia or the nature of regional autonomy in Siberian regionalism reveal the problems inherent in nailing down regionalism's ideological position; however, if these elements can be taken as possible solutions to the problems of Siberia's secondary status within the Russian Empire, then movement's ideological position is understandable. Whether one portion of the movement favors the development of Siberia based upon traditional handicrafts and peasant commune or a second

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<sup>400</sup> A good (and brief) examination of Adrianov's activities is Devlet, "A.V. Adrianov kak etnograf," 9-56; Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," particularly pages 268 and 281.

<sup>401</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Budushchee sibirskoi oblastnoi tendentsii," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 65 (6 June 1907).

group within the movement advocated regional development based upon capitalism, then Siberia's underdevelopment is taken as a given. Whether regionalists wanted increased independence within the tsarist state or autonomy without the state, regionalism's emphasis on increased local responsibility for local affairs proves imminently understandable.

Examining regionalism at the onset of the twentieth century shows how it still represented a level of unity among the intelligentsia. The minor differences on how to achieve regional development should not obscure the fact that regionalists had a vision of Siberia's status within the empire, and that they sought measures to strengthen Siberia. Perhaps the most notable trend in regionalism following Iadrintsev's death was the growth of the liberal portion of the movement at the expense of Populist trends. This mirrored developments in intellectual life throughout Russia during the late 1800s. From the 1860s, the Russian intelligentsia had a mentality that was an amalgam of liberal or neo-Populist points of view, and there should be no reason to doubt that the Siberian intellectuals who came of age in the period of the Great Reforms should be any different from their brethren during the twilight of Imperial Russia. Considering the growing importance of the Russian intelligentsia, Potanin's decision to move to Tomsk proved fortuitous. The cultural and intellectual life of the city injected new life into the "Siberian grandfather" and gave regionalist ideas an active and engaged audience. Following Iadrintsev's death, Potanin had struggled with keeping the movement together. What had been lacking through the first four decades of regionalist development was a proper political crisis for the empire that could prove which intellectual point-of-view was predominant. The 1905 Revolution of gave regionalists a singular focus that they had been sorely lacking.

## 5 REVOLUTIONARY CRISIS

For years, the key ideological thread of regionalism—Siberia’s secondary/colonial status in the Russian Empire—held the various elements of the movement together. The potential for *zemstvo* reforms in Siberia contributed to the regionalist vision for Siberia. The Russian Revolution of 1905, however, crystallized the regionalist conception of self-government in the region and pressed forward the issue of governmental reforms for Siberia. More importantly, the revolution pushed regionalism into closer contact with disparate elements in Siberian society who had their own political plans for Siberia. Coming out of the Omsk Separatist Affair, regionalists had to pay careful attention to how they framed questions of local autonomy or local self-government. As the turn of the century shined a spotlight on the need for a Siberian *zemstvo*, the Revolution of 1905 forced the regionalists to manage relationships with other political groups as they grappled with the question of local governance.

Before analyzing the 1905 Revolution in Siberia, it is necessary to understand some of the broader trends in Russian History leading to the revolution. Dramatic changes within Russian society fed into the origins of the Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905, and several factors fostered the development of a society-wide crisis for the tsarist regime. Among the many problems facing Russia at the turn of the century, peasant land hunger was arguably the largest. In the decades following the 1861 emancipation, the peasant population increased dramatically, with most peasants being tied to the commune. The land did not belong to individual peasants but to the commune as a whole. Moreover, land was occasionally redistributed among peasants. The peasant commune was responsible for taxes, which meant that whenever any peasant left the commune, his tax burden fell on the other peasants in the commune. Additionally, high

redemption payments for land forced some peasants to seek employment outside of the commune.

Another issue confronting the Russian government in the late 1800s was the nationalities question. Because a majority of the Russian Empire was composed of non-Great Russian ethnic groups, pro-Great Russian governmental policies instituted in the early 1880s affected a majority of the population. In the early 1880s, the autocracy could have adopted a conciliatory policy towards these groups but instead enacted policies such as Russification, driving these groups to assimilate with a Great Russian vision that they did not share. Understandably, this alienated minority groups within the empire. The increased dissatisfaction among the empire's non-Great Russians contributed to the general unease permeating Russian society in the early twentieth century.

Capitalist development proved to be another factor that shaped the late imperial period for Russian History. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Russian government embarked on rapid industrial expansion. As a consequence of governmental policies, the Russian Empire saw the development of Russia's railroad system, the rapid industrialization of Russia, and, consequently, the development of a Russian proletariat during the late 1800s and early 1900s. The phenomenal development of Russia's working class population meant that the empire's infrastructure could not keep pace. To the working class it appeared as if the government were exploiting it. Accordingly, working class sentiment turned against the government. At the turn of the century, the evolution of Russia's economy ran parallel with the transformation of political processes within the Russian Empire.

A sharp focus on regionalism obscures broader intellectual and political currents within the Russian Empire. Much of the intellectual heritage that informed regionalist ideology also

contributed to the political movements that emerged in Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of this intellectual heritage can be traced back to the mid-1800s and the political views of men such as Aleksandr Ivanovich Herzen, Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevskii, and the Russian Populists.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Herzen deeply influenced the development of agrarian socialism in Russia, utilizing his newspaper *Kolokol* to popularize his argument that relatively backward Russia was in a better position to develop socialism than industrialized Western Europe. According to Herzen's way of thinking, if Russian peasants could be educated about socialist ideas, the commune could be transformed into a new agrarian socialist society, bypassing the problems associated with industrialization. Russian Populism of the 1870s came to be based upon Herzen's idea that the commune could serve as the key to the socialist transformation of Russia.<sup>402</sup> Herzen also influenced regionalists and their theories on Siberian topics. Regionalists regularly contributed to Herzen's *Kolokol*, and Herzen reciprocated by approving of regional autonomy and supporting "the general principle of national – and regional – liberation from Russian imperialism."<sup>403</sup>

Similarly, Chernyshevskii's philosophy melded with regionalist ideas. Chernyshevskii, according to historian Franco Venturi, "believed in the need to preserve the peasant commune and to spread its principles to industrial production."<sup>404</sup> Also, Historian Alan Wood wrote that Chernyshevskii remained a spokesman for the radical intelligentsia in Russia until he was exiled to Siberia in 1864, but his exile simply extended his influence to that region.<sup>405</sup> Wood continued: "[W]ith or without his approval or even knowledge, Chernyshevskii remained throughout his

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<sup>402</sup> Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, xviii.

<sup>403</sup> Wood, "Chernyshevskii, Siberian Exile, and *Oblastnichestvo*," 57.

<sup>404</sup> Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, xx.

<sup>405</sup> Wood, "Chernyshevskii, Siberian Exile, and *Oblastnichestvo*," 42.

exile both a symbol and an inspiration for the dreams, projects and practical operations of radical movements and organizations in European Russia and Siberia alike – *even to the extent of his being nominated for the political leadership of an autonomous Siberian republic.*”<sup>406</sup> So Chernyshevskii’s vision for the peasant commune can be followed within the neo-Populist trend in regionalism that sought to utilize the peasant commune as a potential foundation for an independent Siberian economy and society. Venturi wrote of the influence of Herzen and Chernyshevskii as having a moral, almost religious tenor, particularly among Russian Populists.<sup>407</sup> As Siberian regionalism developed its ideological direction, many members adopted the Populist mentality about the ability of the peasant commune to transform the country.

When regionalists such as Potanin and Iadrintsev returned to Siberia following prison and exile in the mid-1870s, they also shared a path similar to that of the Populists in the summer of 1874, as Populists’ attempt to take their vision of social revolution to the peasants met with a dramatic failure. Populist calls for social revolution never resonated with peasants who were interested in bettering their lot and not in overthrowing the tsar that they viewed as a protective father figure rather than an oppressor. Often peasants would hand the strangers over to local authorities.<sup>408</sup> While regionalists did not encounter hostility on the part of the Siberian population, they confronted a lack of knowledge and an insufficient intellectual base for their ideas. Siberian regionalists never turned towards revolutionary violence, continuing to pursue their vision by popularizing it within the pages of the periodical press of the day. For many radical groups in Russia, *Narodnaia volia*’s assassination of Alexander II in 1881 created a crisis. The Russian state gutted *Narodnaia volia* and similar revolutionary movements via

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid., 51. [Emphasis added.]

<sup>407</sup> Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, xxiv-xxv.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., xii-xiii.

empire-wide crackdowns.<sup>409</sup> The Department of Police investigated these organizations, placed members of revolutionary organizations under arrest, and even infiltrated revolutionary organizations with agents. From 1881, Russian society lived under emergency provisions that gave the government broad powers to arrest, detain, exile, and imprison offenders without relying on a court decision. While there was something of a lull in revolutionary action within Russia, the final years of the nineteenth century saw the empire moving towards an acute socio-political crisis.

Although the Russian government closely monitored and restricted the empire's revolutionary movements during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the coming of a new century brought about a revival of political activity in the empire. Even though the remnants of *Narodnaia volia* had been subjected to increasing scrutiny from the police, by the early 1900s these remnants had coalesced into the Socialist Revolutionary party. As a precautionary measure—keeping revolutionary violence from getting out of hand and allowing members the opportunity to conduct political rather than revolutionary activity—the SRs created a separate division devoted to revolutionary actions. This separate division—the fighting detachment—assassinated several key ministers in the early 1900s. Occasionally, a member of the Department of Police—an agent provocateur—would be implicated in these assassinations. At one point, even the head of the Socialist Revolutionary's fighting detachment was a police agent. Still, the SRs, as had the Populists, focused on peasant socialism and supplemented it with aspects of Marxist industrial socialism, because not everyone in the movement believed that the peasant provided the answer for the Russian Empire.

The failure of Populism to usher in socialism based upon the peasant commune ultimately led to the emergence of a competing Socialist party, the Russian Social Democratic

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid., 183.

Workers' Party, which espoused a Marxist theory for Russia's development. Founded in 1898, the RSDRP placed its hopes for socialism on the industrial proletariat, though it totaled only about 2.4 percent of the Russian population at the time.<sup>410</sup> Traditionally, socialists within Russia, such as the Populists, had argued that Karl Marx's scientific socialism did not apply to Russia, as the peasant commune would allow Russia to transition into socialism without industrialization, but with the increasingly rapid industrialization of the 1890s, Russian socialists believed that Russia had the potential for a Marxist-styled socialist revolution. By 1903, however, the party suffered from a deep division over two key issues: the nature of the revolutionary institution itself, and the issue of "telescoping" the revolution.

On one side of this debate, Yulii Martov argued that a broad base of membership from among the working class was the best structure for the revolutionary organization. When the party split, Martov and the group that supported his view of the party structure came to be known as the Mensheviks. The Mensheviks argued Russia's industrial development had yet to mature to the point where a bourgeois revolution could take place, and a bourgeois revolution had to precede a socialist revolution. To the Menshevik way of thinking, Russia was still a majority peasant country; it needed time to mature as a capitalist nation. In the course of the Revolution of 1905 in Russia, Martov believed that the proper foundation for capitalism had yet to be prepared and the Russian Social Democrats needed to bide their time while capitalism in Russia reached maturity. Only then, once capitalism had reached a saturation point in Russia, could the Social Democrats launch a proper socialist revolution.

Vladimir Lenin believed Martov's position of waiting for capitalist development in the Russian Empire to be a waste of time and resources. Lenin advocated a small, conspiratorial

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<sup>410</sup> Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, Volume 1: *Russia in Disarray* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 20.



revolutionary organization composed of exclusively professional revolutionaries. Moreover, borrowing future collaborator Leon Trotsky's vision for revolution, Lenin argued that revolution in Russia could be "telescoped." Lenin believed that, before capitalism became entrenched in Russia, a committed group of revolutionaries could cut short the period of bourgeois power and usher in a socialist revolution on the heels of a bourgeois revolution. The 1905 Revolution further convinced Lenin of the correctness of this vision, especially when peasants rose up in substantial numbers and proved their revolutionary potential. For Lenin, a union of revolutionary workers and peasants would be enough to spark a socialist revolution in Russia. Regardless of Russian backwardness, Lenin believed that capitalist development in other European nations had reached the stage of proletarian revolution, and striking at the weakest link of capitalism (the Russian Empire) would break capitalism's hold on the other European nations. Once a European socialist revolution was completed, these nations would support the socialist revolution in Russia.<sup>411</sup> As much as the regionalist movement had changed following the death of Iadrintsev, at the turn of the century it also had to confront the political transformations that had taken place within the Russian Empire, and while most of the regionalist debate following Iadrintsev's death had been internal, the 1905 Revolution forced regionalism into direct relations with these new political parties.

While more radical political parties focused on the question of socialist revolution, Russia's liberals, including liberals within the regionalist movement between the beginning of the twentieth century and the eruption of the 1905 Revolution, came to focus not on revolutionary action but on elaborating their theories concerning *zemstvo* reform for Siberia. The

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<sup>411</sup> Much of this information comes from the combined reading of several works too numerous to mention in single footnote. For more information on the topic, please consult Leopold Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (Boston, Beacon, 1966); Donald W. Treadgold, *Lenin and His Rivals: The Struggle for Russia's Future, 1898-1906* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1955); V.I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?: Burning Questions of Our Movement* (New York: Penguin Publishers, 1988).

introduction of *zemstvos* in European Russia in 1864 fostered a rapid education concerning the development of local organs of self-government.<sup>412</sup> *Zemstvo* organizations in European Russia “were limited to economic and cultural affairs. The *zemstvo* worked in the fields of communications, medicine, popular education (activity in this sphere was supposed to be limited to expenses for the construction and creation of schools, since the Ministry of Education retained control of the educational process), and charity.” *Zemstvos* could petition the government “in areas of economic needs and benefit to the province and used.”<sup>413</sup> The desire for a Siberian *zemstvo* organization proved to be vital to the regionalists’ aim to transform Siberia. Regionalist discussions concerning possible *zemstvo* institutions for Siberia during the late 1870s further evolved into theories for local self-government throughout Siberia during the period. The various local movements never congealed into a broader, empire-wide political movement, but the regionalist movement’s ever-increasing agitation for the introduction of *zemstvo* institutions for Siberia was representative of the broader liberal desire for increased powers of self-government.<sup>414</sup>

In part, the emergence of *zemstvo* organizations in European Russia contributed to the development of liberalism in the late nineteenth century. Doctors, lawyers, and other professionals had opportunities to participate in the political process within Russia, and they saw the deficiencies within that process. By the early twentieth century, the Russian government had resorted to restricting the power of *zemstvos*, and Russian liberals had begun to coalesce into a

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<sup>412</sup> Fedor A. Petrov, “Crowning the Edifice: The *Zemstvo*, Local Self-Government, and the Constitutional Movement, 1864-1881,” Robin Bisha, trans., in Ben Eklof, John Bushnell, Larissa Zakharova, eds., *Russia’s Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 198.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>414</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Est’-li zemstvy v Sibiri?,” in *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* No. 253 (20 November 1902); V. Soldatov, “Vozmozhno li zemstvo v Sibiri?,” *Vostochnoe obozrenie* No. 291 (11 December 1902); “Zemstvo kak factor razvitiia gramotnosti i uchrezhdenii obshchesgvennogo prizreniia,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* No. 48 (3 March 1899).

proper political movement. As the Russian government refused to move forward and find constitutional solutions to the political problems of the day, some disaffected liberals gravitated towards Russia's socialist and radical movements. Still, some of Russia's socialists saw within the *zemstvos* solutions to Russia's problems, moving towards a liberal position. Even though several political parties had emerged, political changes within the Russian Empire in the early 1890s limited political activity.<sup>415</sup> The 1905 Revolution, however, transformed political life in the region, pushing regionalists, Socialist Revolutionaries, Social Democrats, and others to differentiate their goals from those of their counterparts while simultaneously realizing the need for cooperation across political lines.

The need for cooperation between political movements created problems within the regionalist movement. As previously noted, not all regionalists shared the distrust of capitalism and liberalism found among Populists and Marxists. Regionalists had to determine to what extent they could work with their socialist and liberal counterparts without diluting the unity and strength of their movement. Potanin and the regionalists surrounding him believed that associations with political parties would weaken the movement; therefore, Potanin urged regionalists to remain aloof from formal political associations as he continued to develop theories on how a Siberian *zemstvo* and similar organizations of local self-government would remedy the perceived backwardness of the region. Even though Potanin had tried to maintain regionalism's independence from other political movements, the coming of the Revolution of 1905 changed the direction of regionalism.

While the aforementioned social, economic, and political changes provided the appropriate background for the 1905 Revolution, the coming of the Russo-Japanese War

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<sup>415</sup> This reflected the fluidity of political labels within the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century, and those vague political boundaries easily translated throughout the empire. For more information, see Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 118-120.

provided a catalyst that transformed these changes into a revolution. The Russo-Japanese War started in January 1904 (O.S.), originating in part from the Russian desire for a warm water port on the Pacific Ocean—Port Arthur. In the years preceding the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Empire in general and Tsar Nicholas II in particular proved to be both aggressive and adventurous in terms of foreign policy. After the Japanese defeated China in a brief war of 1894-1895, Russia, together with France and Germany, forced Japan to modify the treaty of Shimonoseki. This marked the beginning of a deteriorating relationship between Tokyo and St. Petersburg. Russia also concluded a secret treaty with China where Russia guaranteed Chinese territorial integrity against external threats in exchange for Chinese permission for the Russians to build a railroad—the Chinese Eastern Railroad—through northern Manchuria to Vladivostok. The completion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad tied Russia to China and Korea, bringing the Russian Empire into what the Japanese considered their territorial sphere of influence.

The war began disastrously for Russia, with the Battle of Port Arthur seeing several Russian ships heavily damaged and the city under siege by the Japanese. (Ultimately, the Japanese accepted Russia's surrender at Port Arthur in late December 1904 (O.S.).) The Russian government sought to reinforce the Far Eastern Fleet with ships from the Baltic Fleet, but Port Arthur had already fallen as the Baltic Fleet was in transit. The Japanese met the new Second Pacific Squadron at Battle of Tsushima Straits in May 1905 and achieved a stunning victory, almost completely destroying the erstwhile Baltic Fleet.

While the Russians could have continued the fight in the Russo-Japanese War, a crisis had developed within the Russian Empire, unleashing all of the pent-up social tensions and threatening to fling the empire apart. After the Battle of Tsushima Straits, peace followed fairly rapidly, mediated by United States President Theodore Roosevelt in Portsmouth, New

Hampshire and signed in August 1905 (O.S.). The conclusion of the peace treaty could not obscure the fact that Russia was in the midst of another crisis point with the Revolution of 1905.

Russia's disastrous involvement in the Russo-Japanese War alone did not precipitate the Revolution of 1905, but it contributed to an evolving situation characterized by the emergence of political groups that sought reform, unrest, and in some cases revolution within Russian society. Progressive political groups agitated for changes to the political structure of the Russian state. Similarly, strikes among the workers had steadily increased in the first years of the twentieth century, reaching a crisis point with the strikes at the Putilov works in St. Petersburg in December 1904. While the crisis had not reached a fever pitch, Bloody Sunday in St. Petersburg set the revolution in motion. On 9 January 1905 (O.S.) a procession of workers led by Father Georgii Gapon approached the Winter Palace in order to present a petition to Tsar Nicholas II. Troops guarding the palace fired upon this peaceful procession, shattering the traditional vision of the tsar as the "little father" who looked after his people. The immediate result was some 200 to 1000 deaths and a rising wave of public indignation that spread throughout Russia. As the revolutionary events spread across Russia, they came to the Siberian city of Tomsk, which, after Potanin had moved there in the early 1900s, had become the center of the Siberian regionalist movement.

Established on the banks of the Tom' River in 1604 by a decree from Tsar Boris Godunov, Tomsk was one of the oldest towns in Siberia. It developed rapidly following the discovery of gold in the region in the early 1800s and afterwards became an administrative and economic center for western Siberia. Although Tomsk had emerged as an educational center in Siberia following the establishment of the Siberian Imperial University in 1878 (opened in 1888), after the Trans-Siberian Railroad bypassed the city in favor of Novonikolaevsk

(Novosibirsk) in the 1890s, Novonikolaevsk's economic importance to the empire began to overshadow that of Tomsk.

During the Russo-Japanese War, Tomsk had become where military units were formed, military officers received training, and the wounded and prisoners were housed. Many citizens of Tomsk experienced the war firsthand thanks to their serving at the front. In the early months of the war, soldiers and officers regularly contributed to Tomsk newspapers, particularly to *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, providing reports from the fighting, analytical materials concerning military operations, and even photographs. Newspaper reports about the war and everything connected with it attracted considerable interest in Tomsk, and most of this interest was patriotic in nature. However, as the war continued, it aggravated the already poor economic and social situation in the city. Congestion on the Trans-Siberian Railway that put troops and their transport at a higher value than the supply of food and essential goods for the city provoked a sharp increase in prices. Similar to the situation in St. Petersburg on the eve of the Revolution of 1905, the war provided the appropriate backdrop to the revolution in Tomsk.

As an economic, administrative, and educational center, Tomsk became a magnet for Russia's revolutionary groups. In 1904, Siberia's Social Democrats came to the city and established two underground printing presses, using them to print revolutionary leaflets and brochures.<sup>416</sup> Drawn by the institutions of higher education in Tomsk, the Social Democrats worked on building a real "revolutionary university" in Tomsk that could strengthen the revolutionary movement in Siberia.<sup>417</sup> According to N. Baranskii, the revolutionary Social

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<sup>416</sup> To receive a general idea of the leaflets produced by the Bolsheviks in Tomsk during 1904 and 1905, see Zinoviev and Kharus', eds., *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn' v Tomskoi gubernii*, 108-175. Zinoviev and Kharus' list many of the leaflets published by the Socialist Democrats, including a brief description of the content and where they can be located (typically in the State Archive of the Russian Federation).

<sup>417</sup> Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 119.

Democrats in Tomsk centered their local work on “the students of the university and the technological institute,” saying “All of our best propaganda forces were aimed towards work among the students.”<sup>418</sup>

The university students in Tomsk launched several strikes during the Russo-Japanese War, revealing their widespread discontent with the war. Beginning with the early days of the war, student protests and strikes alternated with temporary university closings in Tomsk.<sup>419</sup> However, the nature of these strikes and protests grew in their intensity during late 1904 and early 1905, leading up to the Revolution of 1905. These strikes and protests were manifestations of the general discontent in Russia, which fed into the banquet campaign of late 1904/early 1905. The banquet campaigns witnessed local liberals organize banquets and deliver speeches with the goal of swaying the tsarist regime to undertake fundamental reforms. According to historian Mikhail Ivanovich Matveev, the liberal campaign in Tomsk did a decent job of leveling criticisms at the Russian government, expressing the desire for a better construction of state power and the need for a constitution. The situation in Tomsk mirrored the situation throughout Russia. In November 1904, the second congress of the Union of Liberation organized a committee that would oversee the banquet campaign in Tomsk. Several local lawyers, one political exile, and Potanin were included in this committee.<sup>420</sup>

During late 1904 and early 1905, students in Tomsk prepared for street demonstrations as a protest against both the Russo-Japanese War and the autocracy. The Bolsheviks had worked on

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<sup>418</sup> Baranskii quoted in *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>419</sup> Again, the chronicle of events from Zinoviev and Kharus’ provides a good timeline of events during the revolutionary period. Starting as early as 12 April 1904, the technological institute saw the rector of the institute, V.A. Obruchev, close the institute in response to student protests. Such reactions proved normal during the revolutionary period. (See Zinoviev and Kharus’, eds., *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn’ v Tomskoi gubernii*, 112, 117.)

<sup>420</sup> Mikhail V. Shilovskii, “Ispol’zovanie bol’shevikami Sibiri ob”edinenii i sobranii gorodskoi i sek’skoi intelligentsii dlia usileniia raboty v massakh v 1904 g.,” *Gorod i derevnia Sibiri v dosovetskii period* (Novosibirsk: Novosibirskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1984), 143.

radicalizing the student protests at the technological institute, and in December 1904, students at the technological institute wrote that they did not trust the government's promises of progressivism and reform. "[W]e are convinced," one student declaration affirmed, "that a radical revision of the existing order is only possible by the overthrow of the autocracy and the convening of a Constituent Assembly of the people."<sup>421</sup> The propagandizing by the Bolsheviks produced results, and students proved to be one of the leading groups during the Revolution of 1905.

As the Russo-Japanese War dragged into 1905, Tomsk, like the rest of Russia, experienced socio-political unrest. On 2 January 1905, one week before Bloody Sunday, students from Tomsk's university and technological institute gathered publicly, rallying in favor of Sunday schools for the city as a means of broadening education. Student protests enjoyed tremendous general support throughout the city, as around three thousand people converged near the Tomsk Assembly building. Some of the more radical students within this gathering at the assembly building handed out leaflets calling for the overthrow of autocracy while singing revolutionary songs. Not surprisingly, authorities arrested some of these more radical members who advocated the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy.<sup>422</sup>

As a member of the Union of Liberation's committee that had been created to oversee the banquet campaign in Tomsk, Potanin, with the help of a local lawyer and graduate of Moscow University, A.A. Kiykov, as well as several local Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, and regionalists organized a banquet for Tomsk to celebrate the anniversary of Moscow University's founding. On the holiday of St. Tatyana (12 January), protesting students, members of the intelligentsia, and several graduates of Moscow University (among them local lawyers, Socialist

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<sup>421</sup> Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 16.

<sup>422</sup> *GATO* F. 3, Op. 70, D. 2658, L. 6-7; *Ibid.*, 120-121.



Revolutionaries, Social Democrats, and regionalists) all came together for a banquet in the Tomsk railroad company's assembly hall.<sup>423</sup> Although Potanin gave an oppositional speech, the people at the meeting mainly focused on peaceful assembly.<sup>424</sup> Not long after Potanin's speech, however, the banquet was interrupted by a group of people led by local Socialist Democrats Nicholas Baranskii and Konstantin Kuznetsov. Even though these local Social Democrats were not necessarily reacting to Potanin's speech, they still sought to turn the banquet into a revolutionary meeting, and after they barged into the assembly hall, they gathered around a central table and pushed Potanin to stand before the gathered crowd.<sup>425</sup> In this scenario, Potanin stood in the midst of various members of Tomsk society—workers and bourgeoisie, educators and students, high-society ladies and political revolutionaries—finding himself thrust into a political spotlight again, this time as a sixty-nine year old Siberian father figure. This proved to be a transformative event, as it bridged the gap between the banquet campaign from the previous year and the ever-increasing radicalism within the city, bringing the 1905 Revolution to Tomsk.

At the same banquet, Social Democrats condemned the autocracy's actions on Bloody Sunday, called for a popular uprising against the tsarist regime, demanded the convening of a Constituent Assembly for Russia, and appealed for a railroad strike within the *oblast'*. Those present at the banquet adopted a resolution that called for the destruction of tsarism by popular uprising and the convening of a Constituent Assembly.<sup>426</sup> Moreover, before the assembly dispersed, the Social Democrats started a collection to help political exiles in the region.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>424</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 169-170; *GATO*, F. 3, Op. 70, D. 2568, L. 6-7.

<sup>425</sup> S.F. Koval', "G.N. Potanin – obshchestvennyi i politicheskii deiatel'," in *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 1, 31-32.

<sup>426</sup> Vasilii Pavlovich Zinoviev, ed., *Rabochee dvizhenie v Sibiri: Istoriografiia, istochniki, khronika, statistika v trekh tomakh* Volume 1 (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1989), 55.

<sup>427</sup> Vinogradova, ed., *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie 1905-1907 gg. v Tomskoi gubernii*, 21-22; Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 119-120.

The banquet assembly at the railroad company's assembly hall took such a dramatic turn because news of the events in St. Petersburg from 9 January had started to filter into Tomsk. While the city celebrated the holiday of Saint Tatyana, *Sibirskaya zhizn'* and *Sibirskii vestnik* both published front-page stories about Bloody Sunday. An official message from St. Petersburg disseminated through the Russian Telegraph Agency detailed the events of Bloody Sunday for the local press, prompting a broad segment of the citizens of Tomsk to call for a commemoration of the victims to be held 18 January.<sup>428</sup> The citizens of Tomsk opted to hold the demonstration on a regular working day. Local Bolsheviks even published a flyer designed to bring as many citizens of Tomsk as possible to the streets in protest. The city government placed the police on guard for an armed uprising, while the Bolsheviks stockpiled weapons and ammunition in preparation for the demonstration.<sup>429</sup>

On the morning of 18 January, so many students attended the gathering that no lectures were held at the university and the technological institute. More than three hundred protestors gathered near the Siberian Imperial University and marched along *Pochtamskaia ulitsa* (modern-day Lenin Prospect) towards the government building along the Tom' River.<sup>430</sup> Police and Cossack divisions met the protestors at the corner of *Pochtamskaia* and *Blagoveshchenskii pereulok* (present-day *pereulok Baten'kova*), a short distance from the governmental palace for the *oblast'* and fired their pistols into the air in an attempt to disperse the protestors. The situation, however, quickly degenerated into a clash between demonstrators and the police that left two dead (a young boy named Andrei Elizarov and an eighteen-year-old worker and member

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<sup>428</sup> *Sibirskaia zhizn'* No. 8 (12 January 1905); *Sibirskii vestnik politiki, literatury i obshchestvennoi zhizni* No. 8 (12 January 1905).

<sup>429</sup> Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 123.

<sup>430</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 170; *GATO*, F. 3, Op. 70, D 2642, L. 64-68.

of the Bolshevik party named Iosef Kononov).<sup>431</sup> An additional forty-five people suffered injuries while another 121 people were arrested.<sup>432</sup>

Soon after the clash between the police and protestors, the students of the Tomsk Technological Institute published a proclamation, comparing the clash to “a massacre worthy of Genghis Khan.” They refused to attend lectures.<sup>433</sup> Once these students went on strike, their protests created a snowball effect of recriminations and closures of educational institutions in Tomsk. Siberian Imperial University opened its doors for sporting events following the clash of 18 January, but students preferred revolutionary speeches by members of the student organization of the Social Democrats. On 24 January, more than 200 additional students walked out of their classes as a protest against governmental crackdowns. These students adopted a resolution against the “Criminal, arrogant policy of the autocratic government expressed most clearly in the recent events in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Baku, and other cities of Russia. This policy has become particularly clear to us in all its outrageous, daring cruelty after the events of 18 January on the streets of Tomsk.” These students, led by members of the student organization of the Social Democrats, declared the university closed and ended their resolution: “Down with the monarchy!”<sup>434</sup> A small group of university students met on 26 January to discuss the possibility of attending classes at the university once more, but approximately 300 students burst into the university’s activity hall and defaced a portrait of Nicholas II.<sup>435</sup> That very day, Mikhail Georgievich Kurlov, the rector of the Siberian Imperial University, closed the university until the

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<sup>431</sup> From the “Proclamation of a Group of Students of the Tomsk Technological Institute,” in Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 235.

<sup>432</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 170; *GATO*, F. 516, Op. 1, D. 2, L. 12-13.

<sup>433</sup> “Proclamation of a Group of Students of the Tomsk Technological Institute,” Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom obizhenii*, 235.

<sup>434</sup> “Resolution Adopted by Students at a Gathering of Students of Tomsk University, 24 January 1905,” Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 237.

<sup>435</sup> Zinoviev and Kharus’, eds., *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn’ v Tomskoi gubernii*, 117.

following school year in response to student unrest. Three days later the technological institute in Tomsk followed suit, closing its doors until the next school year.<sup>436</sup> According to Soviet historian Mikhail Ivanovich Matveev, “The demonstration of 18 January 1905 in Tomsk played a significant role in the development of the revolutionary movement in the east.”<sup>437</sup>

Radicalism among some elements of Tomsk society should not obscure the reality on the ground in the city. The city certainly underwent significant strain during the Russo-Japanese War, and the events of 18 January only served to heighten the radicalism of anti-governmental protests. While many citizens united in protest, and although workers, students, and revolutionaries decried the “criminality” of the tsarist autocracy, their radicalism was balanced by calls for reform from liberal professionals of Tomsk. On the night of 18 January, teachers and professors from the Polytechnic Institute expressed their outrage at the events of that day, asking for an open, public, and impartial examination of the “brutal suppression of demonstrations by the police and Cossacks.”<sup>438</sup> The professors and teachers also declared that, “[N]o self-respecting person could allow such blatant tyranny to happen without protest.”<sup>439</sup> Whether the protests came from radicals or liberals in Tomsk, the widespread condemnation of the police prompted the city government to take action.

The Tomsk City Duma denounced the police crackdown, straining its relations with the police. According to A.V. Witte, a member of the Tomsk Juridical Society at the Siberian Imperial University, “the actions of the Cossacks that took place on 18 January can only undermine respect for the law and its guardians and instill in people a sense of severe anxiety

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<sup>436</sup> N.M. Dmitrienko, *Den' za dnem, god za godom: Khronika zhizni Tomska v XVII-XX stoletiiakh* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2003), 106.

<sup>437</sup> Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*, 126.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid., 125.

and concern for personal and public safety.”<sup>440</sup> Witte lobbied to have the cases of those protesters arrested in the course of the 18 January clash heard before the court rather than having the police handle the proceedings. Even though the city Duma had determined that the protests had aided revolutionary groups, ultimately, it requested a judicial inquiry to bring lawbreakers to justice in a court of law rather than relying on extraordinary measures that were already available to the police.<sup>441</sup>

The periodical press in Tomsk could not always cover the course of events effectively due to censorship. On 19 January, *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* could only mention the “disorders of 18 January” in an oblique way, as it was limited to publishing an official announcement from the press office of the Tomsk mayor. In this announcement, the mayor’s office urged the citizens of Tomsk to “definitely avoid any gatherings in the street.”<sup>442</sup> Later, *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* referenced the street clashes of 18 January when mentioning the arrival of the state prosecutor from the Omsk Court of Justice. The editors could not go into detail about the clashes, however, saying only that the state prosecutor had arrived in Tomsk to investigate “the events on the streets on 18 January.”<sup>443</sup> The 20 January edition of *Sibirskii vestnik* acknowledged that issue from 19 January could not print “City Chronicles,” which was a daily examination of events in the life of the city, in the typical manner because several shops, including printing houses that published information for the paper, had been closed in the wake of the street protests. In the same issue, the editors, although unable to publish any information about the shootings and the arrests of 18

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<sup>440</sup> GATO, F. 127, Op. 1, D. 2956, L. 7.

<sup>441</sup> Vinogradova, ed., *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie 1905-1907 gg. v Tomskoi gubernii*, 25-28.

<sup>442</sup> *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 14 (19 January 1905).

<sup>443</sup> *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 23 (29 January 1905).

January, made sure that the readers knew about store closings and late mail that had created problems for the city.<sup>444</sup>

Among the liberals in Tomsk, the city Duma's assertion that the events of 18 January had contributed to the revolution created some consternation. Teachers and university professors petitioned the Ministries of Justice and Education. A union of professors from the technological institute urged the authorities to acknowledge that

The necessary and inevitable condition for a peaceful path out of this stagnation is to ensure law and order, which consists in the inviolability of the person and the home; freedom of conscience, speech, press, assembly, and association; the equalization of general civil and political rights of all persons without distinction of class, ethnicity, religion, and gender; judicial independence; free participation in the election of national representation; and the implementation of legislative power and control over administration and budgetary affairs.<sup>445</sup>

Professionals in Tomsk, therefore, sought to petition government agencies in an effort to foment change.

On 28 January, the police arrested Potanin for both organizing the banquet and giving a speech at the railroad company's assembly hall on 12 January. Released after about ten days, Potanin spent the next several years under police supervision. Be that as it may, in the midst of the growing revolution, Potanin began working with liberal political groups within the city, as many liberals pushed for greater freedoms and improved political conditions within the empire.<sup>446</sup> Previously, Potanin had struggled with keeping regionalism separate from such political movements; however, in the midst of the 1905 Revolution, he proved willing to work with members of other political groups.<sup>447</sup> Indeed, in the midst of the revolution, many members

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<sup>444</sup> *Sibirskii vestnik politiki, literatury i obshchestvennoi zhizni*, No 15 (20 January 1905).

<sup>445</sup> Zaitsevskii and Vinogradova, eds., *Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie 1905-1907 gg. v Tomskoi gubernii*, 27-28.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>447</sup> Mikhail Shilovskii, "Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin: K 160-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia," *Sibirskaia starina* Number 10, Issue 15 (1995), 3.

of the regionalist movement had started to identify themselves both as regionalists and as members of particular political parties.

The Social Democrats in Tomsk did much to stir up revolutionary sentiment among the city's population. Responding to the evolution of the crisis in Tomsk, local SDs called for strikes among railroad workers. They also tried to assemble an armed demonstration in Tomsk in response to Bloody Sunday. The Tomsk SDs followed the call for an armed demonstration by urging an overthrow of the tsarist regime by popular uprising and the convening of a constituent assembly. At the funeral for Kononov on 30 January, some two hundred people rallied in support of the Social Democrats.<sup>448</sup> The SDs successfully stirred up resentment among workers within the city. Historian V.P. Zinov'ev saw more strike activity within Siberia during the first nine months of the 1905 Revolution than in the previous ten years combined.<sup>449</sup> This increase in strike activity was both a national phenomenon and the deepest crisis that the tsarist regime had faced up to that time.

As historian Abraham Ascher has noted, "By temperament and ability, the men who occupied the leading positions in the Empire were ill-equipped to cope with the growing unrest sweeping across the country."<sup>450</sup> Through mid-February the tsar and some of his advisors (Sergei Witte, for example) continued to insist that only a small area of the country had been affected by the events of Bloody Sunday and that the subsequent fallout would be short-lived. Nicholas's response to the uprisings in early 1905 was to replace the Minister of the Interior Petr Dmitrievich Sviatopolk-Mirsky with political hard-liner Aleksandr Grigor'evich Bulygin and to

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<sup>448</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 170-171.

<sup>449</sup> Vasilii Pavlovich Zinoviev, "Rabochee dvizhenie v Sibiri v 1895-1917 gg.: Statisticheskii analiz," *Vestnik Tomskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta* Number 3, Issue 15 (2011), 15.

<sup>450</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, Volume 1, 102.

appoint other political conservatives as court advisors.<sup>451</sup> Events of 18 February 1905 reveal the indecisive nature of Nicholas II. In the morning, Nicholas denounced the leaders of the revolution who would shake country and try to “create a new government for the country based on principles alien to our fatherland.” In the evening, Nicholas called for the Committee of Ministers to solicit views from private citizens who could offer ideas and suggestions that could improve the state’s organization. That night Nicholas sent a note (the Rescript of 18 February 1905) to Bulygin that initiated the government’s solicitation of legislative proposals in an effort to create a legal and advisory body designed to “improve the livelihood of the people.” Nicholas informed Bulygin that this consultative, legislative assembly would give the people the right to petition the government.<sup>452</sup>

Nicholas II followed up the Rescript of 18 February 1905 with another, issued on 3 April 1905, in which the tsar informed the Governor-General in Irkutsk, P. Kutaisov, of the government’s intention to introduce regional *zemstvos* in Tobol’sk and Tomsk. He granted Kutaisov the authority to organize open discussions about regional *zemstvos* and provided the basis for legalizing regional *zemstvos*.<sup>453</sup> Members of the Tomsk Law Society responded to the imperial rescript by spending three days in early April discussing the official proclamation from Tsar Nicholas II, its implications for Siberian society, and how a regional *zemstvo* should be constructed.<sup>454</sup> Potanin emerged as one of the key leaders in these discussions.

The dramatic turn of political events in early 1905 forced Potanin to strike a delicate balance between keeping regionalist ideas in the forefront of the discussions concerning self-

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 103-104.

<sup>452</sup> Quote from Nicholas II in Ibid., 112; Don Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 10-14.

<sup>453</sup> M.I. Al’tshuler, *Zemstvo v Sibiri* (Tomsk: Tipo-litografiia Sibirsk. T—va Pechati., 1916), 89-90.

<sup>454</sup> Istorik, “Iz istorii zemskogo dvizheniia v Sibiri,” from *Sibirskie voprosy* Vol. 6, Nos. 29-29 (8 August 1910), 15-16.



government in Siberia and making sure that regionalism remained a movement apart from petty political infighting. Potanin believed that regionalism could best serve the interests of Siberia if it remained a supra-class, non-party organization. He also sought to keep like-minded people, including Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, Petr Mikhailovich Golovachev, Nikolai Nikolaevich Koz'min, and Mikhail Bonifat'evich Shatilov, around him.

During the 1890s, Potanin and others within the regionalist movement came to focus upon the development of *zemstvo* organizations for Siberia as vital for fostering regional development.<sup>455</sup> At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the possibility of establishing a Siberian *zemstvo* appeared more of a dream than a reality, as Russia's tsarist autocracy proved unwilling to concede to any kind of political reform for the empire. Transformations wrought by the 1905 Revolution forced the government to make political concessions, and these made *zemstvo* reform a distinct possibility. In the midst of discussions, Potanin found himself thrust into a position of leadership among Tomsk's liberal reformers as they anticipated greater reforms from the Russian government.

By April 1905, Potanin, already nearing his seventies, found himself among the leadership of liberals in Tomsk, and this position took on increased importance during the 1905 Revolution. G.D. Grebenshchikov remembers how Potanin, this Siberian grandfather, drew everyone to him. Intellectuals, community leaders, youths, and teachers all gravitated toward Potanin "like a plant grows towards the sun."<sup>456</sup> Many of these people belonged to liberal socio-

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<sup>455</sup> See "Torzhestvennoe godichnoe Sobranie Tomskogo Iuridicheskogo Obshchestva," in *Sibirskii nabliudatel'* Volume 4, Number 5 (May 1902), 146; Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Kul'turno-prosvetitel'skie organizatsii," *Gorod Tomsk* (Tomsk: Tip. Sibirskogo T-va Pechatnogo dela, 1912), 94-96.

<sup>456</sup> G.D. Grebenshchikov, "Bol'shoi Sibirskii dedushka: iz lichnykh vstrech s G.N. Potaninym," from *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri: Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin: Vospominaniia, stat'i, ocherki, retsenzii, vospominaniia o G.N. Potanine*, Volume 7, E.I. Belen'kii, et al, eds., (Novosibirsk: Novosibirskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1986), 286-287. I have tried to capture the essence of Grebenshchikov's praise

political movements in Tomsk, and these people called upon Potanin for regular contributions to their proposed reforms. One of the most important groups that sought Potanin's assistance was the Law Society of Tomsk.

Potanin participated in Tomsk Law Society's meeting of 10 April 1905 in which its members hammered out multiple resolutions, including resolutions on civil and legal equality; free and compulsory elementary education; and freedom of speech, press, association, assembly, religion; and others.<sup>457</sup> Furthermore, the members of the society also urged the extension of *zemstvo* reforms to Siberia, sending their resolutions to the Council of Ministers and to various newspapers throughout the region.<sup>458</sup> From the meetings of the Law Society in Tomsk, Potanin, Petr Vasil'evich Vologodskii, A.V. Witte, and others emerged with the guiding principles necessary for what they believed would be a proper *zemstvo* organization in Siberia. The "Project for the Basic Principles and Provisions for *Zemstvo* Institutions in Siberia" was the liberal proposal for increased local self-government.<sup>459</sup>

Later that April, a joint meeting was held at which six members of the Tomsk governmental organizations—Law, Society, Technical, Agricultural, Educational, and the Student Mutual-Aid Society—came together to discuss the "Basic Principles." M.N. Voznesenskii, a local SR who participated in the discussions, recommended that the group

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because his language sometimes overflows in its praise for Potanin: "The secret of this love and universal adoration [for Potanin], of course, lies not only in his wisdom, scholarship, or in the sacrifices brought to the public altar but in something else that was in the very personality of Grigorii Nikolaevich, his heart, his soul." (287)

<sup>457</sup> GATO, F. 6000, Op. 1, D. 76, L. 1; Ol'ga Anatol'evna Kharus', "Khronika liberal'nogo dvizheniia v Sibiri v 1905-1907 gg.," in *Materialy k khronike obshchestvennogo dvizheniia v Sibiri v 1895-1917 gg.* V.P. Zinoviev, ed. (Tomsk: Tomskii gosudarstvennii universitet, 1994), 31; "Tomskaia khronika: V iuridicheskoi obshchestve," in *Sibirskaia zhizn'* No. 81 (12 April 1905), 2.

<sup>458</sup> Istorik, "Iz istorii zemskogo dvizheniia v Sibiri," 16.

<sup>459</sup> Krutovskii, "Periodicheskaia pechat' v Tomske," 297-298. A more complete list of those who participated in the discussions concerning *zemstvo* reform in early April 1905 can be found in Krutovskii's work.

should consider vesting provincial authority in a Siberian Regional Duma. With the group divided on whether to propose the creation of a *zemstvo* for Siberia, perhaps due to fear from the central government, Potanin emerged to mediate the dispute, convincing the opponents of a the *zemstvo* to support it.<sup>460</sup> The assembled group finalized the proposal in early May 1905 and published it in the liberal journal *Pravo* in July as the “Draft Guidelines of the Siberian Regional Union.”<sup>461</sup> Ivan Ivanovich Popov recalled that Potanin also played a key role in bringing groups together in an effort to ensure that many elements of the Basic Principles and Provisions for *Zemstvo* Institutions in Siberia went into the subsequent “General Provisions of the Siberian Regional Duma” drafted on 28-29 August 1905.<sup>462</sup> Siberian liberals believed that by pushing for a regional *zemstvo* they were actually proposing the “reform of the entire national system.”<sup>463</sup> Rather than detailing the shape of Siberian *zemstvos*, the article from *Pravo* both encapsulated the liberal goal of stemming the revolutionary tide and elaborated on the Siberian liberal belief that regional administration should be completely reworked, from establishing *zemstvos* designed to manage local affairs, to creating a Siberian Regional Duma to manage the entire region. The development of provincial governments would bridge the gap between *zemstvos* and the regional Duma.

The variations in the “Basic Principles” of April 1905 and the “General Provisions” of August 1905 reflected the various interests of the people who put this proposal together. On one level, the “Basic Principles” portrayed Siberia as an isolated region that needed regional self-government with power invested in a local legislature and *zemstvo* organizations for the territories within the region (which coincided with the traditional regionalist vision for Siberia).

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 297; Istorik, “Iz istorii zemskogo dvizheniia v Sibiri,” 22.

<sup>461</sup> “Proekt osnovnykh polozhenii Sibirskogo oblastnogo soiuzha,” *Prava: Ezhenedel’naia iuridicheskaia gazeta* Volume 8, Number 29 (17 July 1905), pp. 2332-2334.

<sup>462</sup> Ivan Ivanovich Popov, “Iz vospominanii,” from *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri*, Volume 7, 301.

<sup>463</sup> Nikolai Nikolaevich Koz’min, “Oblastnichestvo,” *Sibirskie zapiski* No. 1 (1918), 51.

On another level, the “Basic Principles” fostered liberal ideas (not entirely divorced from regionalist ideas) that focused on local budgets where money stayed in Siberia rather than flowing to European Russia, public education, public health, and social security among other issues. Another section of the “Basic Principles” dealt with abolishing exceptional laws, guaranteeing personal liberties, and amnesty for political criminals.<sup>464</sup> Even though the “Basic Principles” proved discordant, calls for a proper *zemstvo* organization in Siberia persisted. Almost twenty different political organizations in Tomsk debated the merits of the “Basic Principles,” and in the end, the majority of liberals supported the draft of the General Provisions for a Siberian Regional Duma.

Also, the variation in the “General Provisions” revealed how the SRs and liberals who participated in its drafting aimed at reforming Russia’s political system rather than simply focusing on reforming Siberia socio-politically. They had a national vision for their policies. In this context, regionalism stood at another crossroads in its development. Regionalism as envisioned by Potanin was designed to unify opposing groups and to appeal to broader principles that aimed at helping Siberia. Writing in August 1905, Potanin said, “Regionalism is not a party but a union of parties. As the question of reorganizing the entire state reconciles all parties in the state, so, when discussing the fate of the region, all parties should unite.”<sup>465</sup> Potanin saw his task as facilitating that unity, much as he did when the members of the Law Society of Tomsk and other groups discussed the creation of a regional duma, and he convinced the opponents of a duma to support its creation. He hoped that the basic principles of regionalism would bring all Siberians together for the good of the region. As the spring and summer of 1905 gave way to the

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<sup>464</sup> P.A. Golubev, “Tomskii proekt zemskogo polozheniia Sibiri,” in *Sibirskie voprosy: periodicheskii sbornik* No. 1 (1905), 310-316.

<sup>465</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Byt’ ili ne byt’ sibirskomu oblastnichestvu,” *Sibirskii vestnik* Number 178 (28 August 1905).

fall and winter, and the revolution grew in intensity, both in Tomsk and the empire as a whole, Potanin would find out whether regionalism could serve as the glue that would hold the various political groups together through the storm of revolution.

While the rescripts issued by Nicholas II gave hope to liberals, they did not pacify the more revolutionary elements in Russia. Siberia was no exception. As the region's liberals focused their energies on political reform, the more radical groups continued to mount rallies and organize strikes. The Social Democrats believed that the *zemstvo* project represented the narrow interests of a group composed of Siberia's liberals, a small segment of the region's Socialist Revolutionaries, and Siberian regionalists and not those of the people. In fact, from their perspective, any attempt at developing regional institutions of self-government benefitted liberals without helping the workers.

In early 1905, demonstrations, strikes, and rallies increased in frequency in Tomsk. The clerks of the city went on strike after Easter; bakers and cabbies launched a three-day strike on 1 May; railroad workers struck on 14 May; and workers in the city's hat shops went on strike from 27 May through 10 June. Even the managers of the Tomsk railroad company struck from 1 to 4 June. Finally, the Tomsk Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party organized a citywide general strike that lasted from 4 July through 17 July and that witnessed several thousand workers demand increased wages, reduced hours, and better working conditions. The city government used the police and troops to break up these rallies, but in the end, only about ten people suffered arrest.<sup>466</sup>

The split between Potanin and Popov deepened during the summer of 1905, after the latter rejected Potanin's claim that regionalism was a supra-party organization that spoke for the

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<sup>466</sup> Zinoviev and Kharus', eds., *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn' v Tomskoi gubernii*, 123-136.

interests of the entire region.<sup>467</sup> While regionalists in Tomsk worked in conjunction with liberals and SRs in an effort to create *zemstvo* organizations for Siberia and a Siberian Regional Duma to govern the region, others, particularly Popov, worked on alternative projects for self-government. The SR-owned Tomsk newspaper *Sibirskii vestnik* gave Potanin the opportunity to publish an article on the Siberian intelligentsia, and other contributors published editorials that supported regionalist ideas.<sup>468</sup> Popov, in contrast, utilized *Vostochnoe obozrenie* to popularize his ideas on regional autonomy. His proposal, compiled on behalf of the Irkutsk City Duma, envisioned Siberia divided into several dozen areas with each area having its own autonomous duma. According to Popov, the transformations that had taken place in the Russian Empire in the late 1800s had “smoothed over the traditional differences between Russia and Siberia,” bringing the two closer to one another.<sup>469</sup> Popov broke down the traditional interpretations of regionalism and how they may have applied during Shchapov’s lifetime, but the scenario had changed by the early 1900s. “Siberia’s future progress, her industrial development,” Popov added, “to a large extent depends upon the European part of Russia ....”<sup>470</sup> Popov believed that the creation of a Siberian Regional Union would threaten the connection between Siberia and European Russia. According to Popov the union represented an attempt on the part of regionalists, SRs, and liberals to create a Siberian Regional Duma would produce broader regional autonomy and draw even sharper distinctions between Siberia and the rest of the Russian Empire, and Popov had come to believe that it was in Siberia’s best interests to prevent the rift between European Russia and Siberia from growing.

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<sup>467</sup> I.I. Popov, “Iz Sibirskikh ocherkov,” from *Vostochnoe obozrenie* No. 102 (12 May 1905), 1-2.

<sup>468</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Sibirskaiia intelligentsia posle provedeniia Sibirskoi zheleznoi dorogi,” *Sibirskii vestnik* No. 139 (3 June 1905), 2.

<sup>469</sup> Ivan Ivanovich Popov, “Oblastnost’ i ‘Sibirskii Vestnik,’” from *Vostochnoe obozrenie* No. 192 (2 September 1905), 2.

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

Some Siberians shared Popov's reservations about a regional union. When the collected group of regionalists, SRs, and liberals finally published the guidelines for a Siberian Regional Union, guidelines which pointed towards the Siberian Regional Duma as an ultimate goal, many citizens in Tomsk received the news in a cool and sometimes hostile fashion. An editorial in an August 1905 issue of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* claimed, "Everyone completely sympathizes with broad local government in the form of provincial, county, township, and perhaps even rural *zemstvo* units, *but we absolutely refuse to accede to the wishes of a Siberian Duma.*"<sup>471</sup> Opposition within areas of Siberia aside, liberals, SRs, and regionalists continued their pursuit of a Siberian Regional Union as a prelude to a regional duma. At a meeting at P.V. Vologda's apartment on 28-29 August 1905, the congress of the Siberian Regional Union adopted a charter for the organization. While many people participated in the debates surrounding the founding of the Siberian Regional Union, archival sources show that Potanin served as the spiritual leader of this group.<sup>472</sup> The assembled group selected several delegates, including, of course, Potanin, to represent Siberia at a congress to be held in Moscow on 12-15 of September.

While in Vologda's apartment in late August, the Siberian Regional Union also adopted a charter in which the members sought to define the relationship between European Russia and Siberia. Part of this charter said:

Being an indivisible part of Russia, Siberia participates on an equal footing with the rest of Russia, in the general system of state government. Owing to her historic, geographic, ethnographic, and economic conditions, as well as purely local trade—industrial and agricultural interests—she represents a separate region. Each region has the right of self-government, therefore it is declared that Siberia, owing to the above-mentioned conditions and interests, needs the organization of a regional system of self-government, in the form of a Siberian Regional Duma, which should independently solve all local affairs and questions: social, economic, cultural, and educational ...<sup>473</sup>

<sup>471</sup> "Nuzhna-li Sibirskaiia Duma," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 170 (19 August 1905) [Emphasis added].

<sup>472</sup> GATO, F. 3, Op. 12, D. 3830, L. 154.

<sup>473</sup> Ivan Innokent'evich Serebrennikov, "The Siberian Autonomous Movement and Its Future," *Pacific Historical Review* Volume 3, Number 4 (Dec. 1934), 401-402.

This statement of purpose, according to a former official in the Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia, Ivan Innokent'evich Serebrennikov, indicated that the question of separatism was non-existent in the ranks of the Siberian Regional Union and that supporters of the union wanted autonomy for Siberia *through* a constitutional government in Russia.<sup>474</sup>

By September 1905, Potanin was truly the Siberian grandfather. While Potanin traveled to Moscow, citizens in Tomsk, Irkutsk, and other cities in Siberia celebrated his seventieth birthday in a series of journal and newspaper articles.<sup>475</sup> They praised his steadfast loyalty to Siberia, lauded his scientific discoveries and explorations, and commended his desire to see the region develop in every sense of the word. Potanin was at the apogee of his influence, and he wielded that influence to the best of his ability, but the political situation in the city continued to deteriorate.

As events throughout Russia and within the city of Tomsk spiraled out of control in mid-October, elevated social tensions, wave after wave of strikes, and increasingly radical political meetings led to student unrest, university closures, and acute food shortages. The political strike in mid-October added to an already tense political situation in Tomsk. On 13 October, approximately one thousand employees and managers of the Siberian Railway went on strike, and from one day to the next, printers, students, and workers in the city's pharmacies and stores all joined the strike.<sup>476</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Ibid., 402-403.

<sup>475</sup> D.A. Klements, "G.N. Potanin: K 70-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia," in *Russkoe bogatstvo* No. 9 (1905), pp. 183-188; T. Farafontova, "G.N. Potanin: Po povodu 70-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia," in *Obrazovanie* No. 10 (1905), pp. 293-300; multiple articles on page two of *Sibirskii vestnik* No. 194 (21 September 1905); "G.N. Potanin," in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 195 (21 September 1905), pg. 2.

<sup>476</sup> G.S. Rassokhin, *Sobytiia v Tomske v oktiabre 1905 goda* (Tomsk: Tipo-litografiia Tomskoi zheleznoi dorogi, 1917), 3-5.



On 18 October, police dispersed a massive student demonstration where most participants were between twelve and thirteen years of age and none was older than seventeen years old. The police, led by P.V. Nikol'skii, the Chief of Police for Tomsk, rode into the meeting and broke up the demonstration by force, with some of the students taking refuge in the *okrug* court within the city.<sup>477</sup> The mayor of Tomsk, Al'fons Vacil'evich Witte, met these students and escorted them to the city дума building, where the city дума passed resolution demanding that the governor, V.N. Azanchevskii-Azancheev, remove Nikol'skii from office (for abuse of power) and initiate criminal proceedings against him, dismiss the Cossacks as a portion of the city's police force, and release political prisoners.<sup>478</sup> Also, the city дума voted to conduct night-and-day patrols throughout the city as an alternative to police patrols. E.L. Zubashev, the director of the Tomsk Technical Institute, sent a telegram to the Minister of Internal affairs on 19 October in which he and the teaching staff at the institute decried the events of 18 October and demanded the dismissal of the police chief and the governor. Ultimately, governor Azanchevskii-Azancheev declared the night security details organized by the city дума illegal, although he decided to release some 160 political prisoners in response to the дума's complaints. The city дума ignored the declared illegality of the security details and provided money to buy weapons for a people's militia.<sup>479</sup>

In the nation at large, the political situation changed rapidly. While Sergei Witte had issued a manifesto on 6 August 1905 in which he called for the convening of a дума as an advisory body for the Russian state, continuing discontent with the regime prompted Tsar Nicholas II to issue a manifesto on 17 October 1905, which increased civil liberties and transformed the дума into an elective body and the lower house of a new legislative branch for

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<sup>477</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>478</sup> GATO, F. 11, Op. 4, D. 2, L. 74; GATO, F. 127, Op. 1, D. 2956, L. 11.

<sup>479</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriiia goroda*, 171-172; GATO, F. 516, Op. 1, D. 1, L. 31-32.

Russia. News about the tsarist manifesto arrived in Tomsk the morning following the police department's crushing the student demonstration, which constituted only one part of a growing crisis in the city of Tomsk.<sup>480</sup> First, the growing conflict between the city government and the police had put a severe strain on that relationship. The city government had been dissatisfied with the police's decision to suppress radical and revolutionary actions by force, leading the city to create a local militia that ran parallel to the police force. Second, the existence of a large number of revolutionary youth in Tomsk provoked a backlash against the intelligentsia in the city. Third, the city government, further widening the rift between itself and the police, closed several police stations throughout the city. Finally, a wave of anti-Jewish sentiment swept through the city, culminating a Black Hundred pogrom that consumed entire sections of the city.<sup>481</sup>

Beginning early in the morning of 20 October, the pogrom started with a group of working class and small traders gathering near one of the city's police stations, chanting, "Kill the Jews, Poles, students, and strikers," and "The дума has fired the police!" As the number of demonstrators grew to around 300, they marched along *Pochtamskaia ulitsa* from Novo-Sobornaia Square to the city дума building, carrying flags and portraits of the tsar. Members of the people's militia barricaded themselves in the building and fired a few shots at the assembled protesters, and thereby transformed the protest into a full-blown riot and pogrom. The assembled protesters moved towards Troitsky Cathedral, killing a couple of students and a railroad worker. They pushed towards the theatre, where a revolutionary meeting had been planned. In the meantime, the city дума had cobbled together a city guard of about sixty men. The two groups

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<sup>480</sup> Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, Volume 1, 226-240.

<sup>481</sup> Nikolai Semenovich Lar'kov and Irina Vladimirovna Chernova, *Politsmeistery, komissary, nachal'niki: rukovoditeli pravookhranitel'nykh organov Tomskoi gubernii, okruga i oblasti v XIX-XX vv.* (Tomsk: Izdatelvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1999), 90-91.

soon clashed, with the city guard ultimately taking refuge in the railway building with some four hundred workers. The protesters set the building on fire. Workers and city guard members who jumped from the second floor window to escape the flames were killed by the assembled protesters. When the city firefighters arrived, the protesters kept them from doing their job. The events of 20 October ended only when troops managed to bring some people—only about thirty—from the building.

The following day, a refreshed group of protesters gathered at Novo-Sobornaia Square and the pogrom spread to other areas of the city. Jewish homes and shops were destroyed. The bishop in the city tried to stop the protests, but the protesters refused to heed his admonitions. The pogrom ended only on 22 October, after the city government had called in troops. Almost seventy people were killed, and a further 129 people were injured in the pogrom.<sup>482</sup> Events like the pogrom revealed the radical turn of events in Tomsk and showed the deeper divisions in the city during “October days.”

The broader divisions within Tomsk, exemplified by the pogrom and the political transformations wrought by the October Manifesto of 17 October 1905, prevented regionalists, SRs, and liberals from fulfilling their hope for a Siberian Regional Duma in 1905.<sup>483</sup> The establishment of the State Duma and the calling of elections for this legislative body did much to weaken calls for a regional duma.

In the aftermath of the October pogrom in Tomsk, public interest focused on the October Manifesto, which had provided an opportunity for various political parties and professional

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<sup>482</sup> This is an understandably short examination of the Tomsk pogrom of 20-22 October 1905. Much of this information can be found in Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 172-173. For a more detailed analysis on the course of events, see Mikhail V. Shilovskii, *Tomskii pogrom 20-22 oktiabria 1905 g.: khronika, komentarii, interpretatsiia* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 2010).

<sup>483</sup> It would take instead until late 1917/early 1918 before a Siberian Regional Duma could be elected and seated. For more information, see Akachenok, et al., eds. *Bor'ba za vlast' Sovetov v Tomskoi gubernii*, 180-183 and Shilovskii, “Sibirskaya oblastnaya duma.”

organizations to organize. Workers, clerks, teachers, engineers, and others organized into professional unions. On 25 November, students and members of the liberal intelligentsia in Tomsk came together to form the Constitutional Democratic Party/People's Freedom Party, which quickly grew to five hundred members. By the end of the year, the Union of 17 October (or the Octobrists) had picked up two hundred members, including military officers, professors, and merchants. Other political groups—including the SRs, the Russian Social Democratic Party, and the Bund—received some legal sanction and solidified their political foundation.<sup>484</sup> As the revolution wound down, only the Social Democrats engaged in underground, illegal work while the other parties focused on legal political activities.

In the course of pursuing Siberian *zemstvo* reforms and a regional дума, regionalists, Socialist Revolutionaries, and liberals had come together to elaborate their vision. Some liberals from Tomsk who participated in the construction of *zemstvo* and дума proposals formed the nucleus of the Constitutional Democratic (Kadet) party, as at least three key participants in writing the proposals went on to become key members of the Kadet party organization in Tomsk. While Potanin associated with liberals within various political parties, he still attempted to keep the regionalist movement separate from joining any political parties. Potanin's desire to keep regionalism as a liberal movement above politics laid the foundation for regionalism to become a potential source of anti-Bolshevik rhetoric utilized by SRs, Kadets, and others during the Bolshevik Revolution and Civil War.

As 1905 gave way to 1906, the wave of emotions that motivated those people who favored a Siberian Дума gave way to political organization and preparations for elections to the State Дума, and with contested elections came political infighting amongst these newly formed political parties. The Kadet-owned *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* actively campaigned against the Octobrists,

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<sup>484</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriiia goroda*, 173-174.

accusing them of becoming the “ideological defenders of the interests of the capital.”<sup>485</sup> While liberal politicians sought to draw distinctions between those who were, for the most part, satisfied with the reforms enacted by the tsarist regime in October and those who believed that the regime had not gone far enough. That distinction played out over the course of the elections of 1906, and the Kadets proved particularly successful. Ten of the sixteen Siberian deputies to the First State Duma identified themselves as Kadets.<sup>486</sup> The Kadets had the most favorable position, as P. I. Makushin sold the newspaper *Sibirskia zhizn'* after the pogrom to a group of university professors who used the newspaper as a platform for their ideas. The widespread circulation of *Sibirskaia zhizn'* meant that the Kadets could influence a broad strata of voters. The Kadet A.I. Makushin was the first person elected to the State Duma from the city of Tomsk.

Regionalism evolved during the revolutionary period. Initially, Potanin had wanted to remain aloof from political parties, but the emergence of a State Duma pushed regionalists into closer cooperation with political parties, particularly the Kadets. Initially, this appeared to be a viable association for regionalists, as Kadets expressed the same basic liberal points of view as the regionalists expressed. The Kadet focus on educational reform, economic development for Siberia, and the end of exile resonated with regionalists. Collaboration when producing the guidelines for a Siberian Regional Union revealed that regionalists and other liberals, particularly Kadets, worked well together. However, a tremendous potential for conflict existed in this association, as Kadets remained steadfast centralists who refused to envision autonomy for the various regions of the empire. Consequently, as the revolution played itself out, Potanin vacillated between Kadet-oriented positions and those that reflected the influence of the Socialist Revolutionaries.

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<sup>485</sup> *Sibirskaia zhizn'* Number 9 (13 January 1906).

<sup>486</sup> I.N.L., “Sostav sibirskikh deputatov pervoi Gosudarstvennoi Dumy,” in *Sibirskie voprosy: periodicheskii sbornik* No. 4 (1906), pp. 44-46.

By 1907, however, the revolution was in full retreat. Nicholas II had convened and dismissed the first State Duma, calling for elections for a second State Duma that he hoped would be more conservative. On 3 June 1907, Nicholas II dismissed the second State Duma as well. The revolution was effectively at an end. By this time, Potanin had started working on a series of articles for *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* that would ultimately be compiled into a separate work—*Oblastnicheskaiia tendentsiia v Sibiri*.<sup>487</sup> In producing this brief work, Potanin sought to shore up the regionalist position. He reaffirmed Shchepov's vision of Siberia and wrote: "The emergence of regionalism is a natural process of the development of the productive forces and culture of the region."<sup>488</sup> Potanin also theorized about Populist ideas and how they could be incorporated into regionalist theory. Refusing to acknowledge that the agrarian problem was an empire-wide problem, Potanin attempted to utilize this problem to advocate, again, for the creation of a Siberian Duma that would be able to address the issue. He still held Siberia up as a refuge for peasants hoping to escape European Russia.<sup>489</sup> This eclectic vision of regionalism espoused by Potanin represented an attempt on the part of the movement's chief ideologue to come to terms with the changing political situation in Russia following the 1905 Revolution.

Between the revolutions of 1905 and those of 1917, the philosophy of regionalism gravitated from the Kadets and towards the Socialist Revolutionaries. The neo-Populist/Socialist Revolutionary elements that had existed within regionalism reflected an attempt to deal with Russia's political transformation. The shift in regionalist ideology represented the changes taking

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<sup>487</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Mestnaia tendentsiia v Sibiri do 60-x godov," in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 28 (20 May 1907); Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Pervoe vystuplenie oblastnikov v Sibiri," Ibid., No. 30 (23 May 1907); Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Piat' sibirskikh oblastnykh voprosov," Ibid., No. 41 (6 June 1907); and G.N. Potanin, "Budushchee sibirskoi oblastnicheskoi tendentsii," Ibid., No. 65 (6 July 1907).

<sup>488</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 268.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid., 289.

place in Russian society, as regionalists tried to find a place for their ideology in an empire transformed by the revolution.

Ol'ga Anatol'evna Kharus', an historian at Tomsk State University, has argued that focusing on the political organization of liberal groups like regionalism necessitates limiting the period of study to 1905 through 1917 simply because there was very little in the way of political life in Siberia during the 1800s, and the revolutionary year of 1917 is worth study in its own right. Kharus' acknowledged the difficulty of separating regionalism from liberalism in the interrevolutionary period.<sup>490</sup> Close collaboration between regionalists and other liberal political parties blurred the boundaries between them between 1905 and 1917. As regionalists also worked with political groups to form new ideas and revise old ones, they had to modify their ideology. Much like other events in the history of the movement—the closure of the University of St. Petersburg, the Siberian Separatist Affair, the death of Iadrintsev, and the coming of the Revolution of 1905—events forced regionalists to adapt their ideology and their means of achieving their goals, both of which pushed regionalists in new directions with dramatic implications for the movement.

Between the revolutions of 1905 and 1917, liberal groups such as Kadets began to promote notions of political decentralization for the Russian Empire for their own political purposes. In *Russkaia mysl'*, Kadet N.V. Nekrasov borrowed an element from regionalist ideology by claiming that the Russian state “cannot keep up with the local needs of all parts of the state. Indeed, systematic work concerning all the details of cultural and economic life within such a vast region as Siberia cannot be carried out at the center. The only feasible solution can be

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<sup>490</sup> Ol'ga Anatol'evna Kharus', *Liberalism v Sibiri nachala XX veka: Ideologiya i politika* (Tomsk: Izd. Tomskogo universiteta, 1996), 10.

built upon the principle of broad decentralization ...”<sup>491</sup> Between the revolutions, therefore, Siberian liberals who sought to transform the political life of the Russian Empire found in regionalism the slogans and the ideology that could serve their purposes. Potanin and his fellow regionalists had to find ways to distinguish themselves from liberal political parties while keeping their ideology intact.

## 6 SURRENDERING TO REALITY

As regionalism evolved in the wake of the 1905 Revolution, its members found themselves searching for the appropriate political path to take. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found Gregorii Nikolaevich Potanin trying to find a way of unifying regionalism and attempting to revise elements of regionalist theory to fit the new political reality. During the 1905 Revolution, Potanin had focused his attention to questions of local self-government. In helping to compose the “Project for the Basic Principles and Provisions for *Zemstvo* Institutions in Siberia” and in participating in its adoption by the Siberian Regional Union as the “General Provisions of the Siberian *Zemstvo* System,” Potanin and the regionalists who surrounded him hoped to persuade the tsarist government to recognize Siberia as an integral part of the empire. Moreover, regionalists continued to push for a degree of regional autonomy and elements of local self-government, which they hoped would come in the form of local *zemstvos* and a Siberian Regional Duma. However, the Tsarist Manifesto of 17 October 1905 and the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire of 23 April 1906 did nothing to change Siberia’s status within the empire. However, the Fundamental Laws changed the political process within the empire, allowing for elections to the State Duma. In light of this development, those Siberian

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<sup>491</sup> N.V. Nekrasov, “Pis’mo o natsional’nostiakh i oblastiakh: Kul’turnaia i politicheskaia problemy Sibiri,” from *Russkaia mysl’* volume 33 (February 1912), 111.



political groups that had participated in composing and adopting the “General Provisions” shifted their focus to campaigning for elections to the State Duma. The First and Second State Dumas, although both had left-of-center political majorities, never considered Siberian issues of paramount importance. On a local level, while the changing political situation in Russia following the 1905 Revolution had spawned official political parties that would contest elections to the new State Duma established by the Tsarist Manifesto of 17 October 1905, regionalism in Siberia had to evolve to remain salient in the new political situation. Regionalists continued to publish material in local newspapers (particularly Potanin’s memoirs in *Sibirskaiia zhizn’*), showing that members of the movement remained concerned with how their ideas were understood and how they themselves were perceived. However, in the period between the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, regionalists struggled with the dilemma of becoming a proper political party or finding a political party that worked well with their ideology.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, political organization among Siberian liberals proved practically non-existent. Although regionalism represented a solid foundation for a political philosophy, many regionalists rejected, on intellectual grounds, purely political questions, and this remained the standard for Siberian regionalists until the Revolution of 1905, when political life in Siberia experienced a brief flurry of activity.<sup>492</sup> The Revolution of 1905 proved beneficial for regionalist ideas because it promoted debates on regional self-government, autonomy, and even separatism. Furthermore, the revolutionary events of 1905 to 1907 took the politically charged concept of Siberian *separatism* and subsumed it (albeit temporarily) under the mantle of regional autonomy and self-government within the Russian Empire. Regionalists who had initially conceived of European Russian/Siberian relations as a metropole/colony

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<sup>492</sup> E.I. Cherniak, *Eserovskie organizatsii v Sibiri v 1917-nachale 1918 gg.* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1987), 21.

relationship saw the potential for autonomy and self-government in the midst of the revolution subsume the old metropole/colony construction of regionalist ideology.<sup>493</sup> There were new political parties in Siberia, however, and regionalists also confronted reality transformed yet again following the 1905 Revolution. Between the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917, regionalism and the emerging political parties experienced dramatic fluctuations in fortunes. Although the October Manifesto fostered political development within the empire, the increased political activity ran headlong into the autocracy's increased repression of political organizations, with this repression hindering the further development of Siberian liberalism, which remained stubbornly stagnant throughout the period from 1907 through 1917.

Socialist Revolutionaries found their party deeply affected by the political crisis in the Russian Empire. For the most part, radicals who had been administratively exiled to Siberia participated as active members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Showing its relative strength as early as 1901—when the party established an underground publishing office in Tomsk—the SRs boasted several hundred members within the city's underground organization by the time the tsarist government issued the Manifesto of 17 October.<sup>494</sup> Following the Manifesto, political parties on a national and a local level sought to establish official party organizations, and the Socialist Revolutionary Party emerged as one of the major parties in Siberia. Indeed, members of the Socialist Revolutionary Party were arguably the most politically active people in the city of Tomsk. Once the party could organize openly, Socialist Revolutionaries, much like regionalists, sought to coordinate student activity in Tomsk. To strengthen their party structure, SRs actually

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<sup>493</sup> Sergei Vasil'evich Seliverstov, "G.N. Potanin: Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo mezhdru zapadnichestvom i evraziistvom (vtoraia polovina XIX-nachalo XX v.) in *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: Istorii* (2007), 110.

<sup>494</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istorii goroda*, 168; A.L. Afanas'ev, "Eserovskie organizatsii Sibiri v period revoliutsii, 1905-1907 gg." In K.V. Gusev, ed. *Neproletarskie partii Rossii v trekh revoliutsiakh: Sbornik statei* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 160.

worked together with regionalists in founding the Siberian Student Circle in Tomsk. The SRs created and organized the circle while members of the regionalist movement—Potanin and Adrianov, for example—served as two of its leaders. Governmental crackdowns on the Socialist Revolutionaries in the wake of the tsar’s dissolution of the Second State Duma in early June 1907, gave SRs little choice but to reduce their level of political activity. That exiled political radicals comprised much of Siberia’s Socialist Revolutionary Party meant that the party was particularly vulnerable to governmental repression. Groups sponsored by the Tomsk SRs were also weakened by political reaction. The Siberian Student Circle, for example, dissolved in late 1910 or early 1911, as the government’s crackdowns on political radicals precipitated the collapse of the city’s SR party organization.<sup>495</sup> Siberia’s Social Democrats also suffered at the hands of the imperial government.

Siberia’s Social Democrats merged with student groups in the city as early as 1903, creating a party organization based on the youth of Tomsk. Even more than their Socialist Revolutionary rivals, Siberia’s SDs preferred to operate as an underground organization. At the first important meeting of Siberia’s Social Democrats, held in Irkutsk on 30 October 1905, the assembled Social Democrats adopted a resolution vowing to “fight with weapons in their hands as long as the power of the tsar was not completely broken ...”<sup>496</sup> Because Siberia’s SDs opted to focus on underground political organization, the size of the Tomsk Social Democratic organization proved relatively small compared to that of the Socialist Revolutionaries. Despite some weaknesses, the city’s SDs numbered approximately 300 members by the end of 1905, and by the beginning of 1907, the broader Siberian Social Democratic organization had about 3500 members, and therefore represented a significant political party in the early days of Russia’s

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<sup>495</sup> I. Zinshtein, “Sibirskii kruzhok,” *Sibirskii student* No. 1 (May 1914), 59-61.

<sup>496</sup> A.P. Okladnikov and V.I. Shunkov, eds. *Istorii Sibiri: S drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* Volume 3 (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo “Nauka,” 1968), 268.

legal political movements.<sup>497</sup> Much like their SR and regionalist counterparts, the Social Democrats—urged on by V.I. Lenin—continued their organizational work among students. For the most part, however, Social Democrats worked with unions and the working class. The relatively small size of the working class within Siberia contributed to the relative weaknesses in the Siberian SD party. The Marxist orientation of the SDs also meant that they clashed with regionalists over ideological differences. SDs understood regionalism as a liberal, bourgeois, and reactionary political movement in that undermined the Siberian working class.<sup>498</sup> Governmental crackdowns starting in 1907 pushed Socialist Democrats even deeper underground. The key difference between the socialist groups and the liberal political parties was the socialists' tendency to utilize underground, illegal methods to further their political goals as opposed to the legal means used by liberal political parties.<sup>499</sup> In Siberia, liberals focused their political energies on two key parties: the Union of 17 October—the Octobrists—and the Constitutional Democratic Party—the Kadets.

While socialist organizations enjoyed some success in Siberia, liberal groups like the Kadets and the Union of 17 October established local party cells, becoming the two main liberal parties actively participating in the political life of Siberia. The first proper liberal party for the Russian Empire was the Union of Liberation, which was founded in early 1904 in St. Petersburg, but the movement split following the October Manifesto, with the more conservative elements opting to support the tsarist government's attempts at reform and forming the Union of 17 October (Octobrist). On 14 December 1905, at the founding meeting of the Tomsk branch of the Union of 17 October, many well-known citizens of Tomsk, particularly professors from the

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> M.B. Shinfel'd, *Istoriografiia Sibiri (konets XIX – Nachalo XX vv.)* (Krasnoiarsk: Krasnoiarskii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii institut, 1973), 90-102.

<sup>499</sup> Zinoviev and Kharus', eds., *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn' v Tomskoi gubernii*, 33; Cherniak, *Eserovskie organizatsii v Sibiri*, 21.

universities and even the governor, joined this party. In short order, Tomsk had between 200 and 300 Octobrists, and the party's members managed to spread their organization from the city to the countryside.<sup>500</sup> The Octobrists even proved strong enough to start the publication in January 1906 of their own party newspaper, *Vremia*, and although the party was fairly popular in Tomsk, it did not enjoy much success in the elections to the First State Duma in 1906.<sup>501</sup> That lack of political success led many of the party's members in the Tomsk Octobrist party organization to leave the party in September 1906 and join the Constitutional Democratic Party, which came to dominate the Octobrists in the Tomsk *oblast*, thanks to a stronger and more widespread organizational structure.<sup>502</sup>

While the Octobrists attempted to work within the political confines created by the October Manifesto, the Kadets believed that the manifesto did not go far enough in establishing true freedom within the Russian Empire. Still, the Kadets capitalized on the manifesto's provision that allowed for the formation of political parties, rapidly developing party cells in all major cities in Siberia and ultimately establishing five provincial, fourteen municipal, and two county level organizations. While the Octobrists were liberals, they operated from the position that Russia needed to utilize concessions within the tsarist manifesto to build a constitutional monarchy with a government beholden to the State Duma. The Kadets represented a position slightly to the left of the Octobrists, within the Union of Liberation, and in Tomsk, the party's members established two separate Kadet organizations: a provincial department and a Kadet student organization.<sup>503</sup> Established on 25 November 1905, the political department for Tomsk

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<sup>500</sup> Zinoviev and Kharus', eds., *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn' v Tomskoi gubernii*, 33.

<sup>501</sup> Kharus', *Liberalizm v Sibiri nachala XX veka*, 20.

<sup>502</sup> Kharus', "Khronika liberal'nogo dvizheniia v Sibiri v 1905-1907 gg.", 33-35; Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriiia goroda*, 174.

<sup>503</sup> Iia Gerogievna Mosina, *Formirovanie burzhuaizii v politicheskuiu silu v Sibiri* (Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, 1978), 75.

included local publishers, clerks, pharmacists, teachers, engineers, and other professionals. Also, several professors from the Tomsk Technical Institute and the Imperial University in Tomsk—V.A. Obruchev, M.N. Sobolev, and E.L. Zubashev, to name but three—joined the regional Kadet organization. Furthermore, within a few weeks of the issuing of the October Manifesto, around 500 students and members of the local intelligentsia began to gravitate towards the Kadet Party.<sup>504</sup>

Many of Tomsk's university professors, as active Kadets, attempted to revive the Academic Union, which had fallen into disfavor with the government soon after being created in August 1905. Tsarist officials argued that Kadets within the university had used lectures to spread unrest among the students, using that as a reason for shutting down the Academic Union. By 1909, the tsarist government, having reclaimed much of its political control, would not allow the liberals to revive the old Academic Union. In the interim, however, professors managed to hold informal meetings at their homes and apartments, which led one tsarist official to note that, "under the guise of being guests ... they developed reactionary measures against governmental order and ways of spreading unrest among their students."<sup>505</sup> This official assessment represented a skewed interpretation of political activities on the part of university professors. According to the evidence available, erstwhile members of the Academic Union, as Kadets, sought various ways—both legal and illegal—to popularize their ideas, but the government tended to look upon their activities with suspicion.<sup>506</sup> This political mistrust represented one of two important aspects of political life in Russia between the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917: the Russian government looked upon political groups with suspicion, and party membership proved a fluid concept, as distinctions between political parties had not been clearly defined at this point.

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<sup>504</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriiia goroda*, 173-174.

<sup>505</sup> *GATO*, f. 126, op. 2, d. 2597, l. 411.

<sup>506</sup> Zinoviev and Kharus', eds., *Obshchestvenno-politicheskaia zhizn' v Tomskoi gubernii*, 40-41.

A brief survey of the memberships of the Socialist Revolutionary, Social Democrat, Octobrist, and Kadet parties confirms the absence of political differentiation in Siberia in the wake of the 1905 Revolution. For example, the Kadets listed A.A. Zhemchuzhnikov (a Social Democrat) in their party rolls, while Social Democrats freely moved from Menshevik to Bolshevik ranks and back again with regularity.<sup>507</sup> The fluidity of membership reveals the lack of political distinctions in Siberia and attests to the rapidly changing political fortunes in the region following the Revolution of 1905. It should also be noted that these political organizations were less interested in formulating philosophical positions that would distinguish them from the other parties than they were in preparing for elections to the first State Duma, which convened in April 1906. Officially, the Socialist Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks boycotted the elections to the first State Duma, however.<sup>508</sup>

Within the city of Tomsk, the Kadets enjoyed the most advantageous position prior to the election, thanks in large measure to their control of one of the most influential regional newspapers—*Sibirskaiia zhizn'*. After the Revolution of 1905, Petr Ivanovich Makushin sold *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* to a group of university professors associated with the Kadet party, and these professors used the newspaper to influence public opinion to the advantage of the Kadets.<sup>509</sup> In elections to the First State Duma, the Kadets won approximately thirty-eight percent of the seats available in the Duma, making the Kadets the majority party in the State Duma. For the city of Tomsk, Kadets, with the assistance of SRs and regionalists such as Potanin, Petr Vasil'evich

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<sup>507</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia*, 174.

<sup>508</sup> Officially, the Socialist Revolutionary Party did not condone participation in the elections to the First State Duma, but many people who secured election to the First Duma as independent members were affiliated with the Socialist Revolutionary Party. For further information on the election results, see Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905, Volume 2: Authority Restored* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 86-88.

<sup>509</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, the circulation of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* exceeded 15,000 by the Revolution of 1905.

Vologodskii, and M.N. Sobolev, elected Aleksandr Ivanovich Makushin as the representative for the city of Tomsk, despite his role in the Black Hundred pogrom.<sup>510</sup> As the newly elected Kadets arrived to take their seats in the Duma, they believed that the government had not gone far enough towards reform, and freshly inserted into the political life of the Russian Empire, they immediately found themselves at odds with a ruler, Nicholas II, who had no intention of going beyond the basics.

Officially, the Russian government had legalized political parties within the Russian Empire; however, as many members of the First and Second State Duma belonged to parties that participated in illegal activities, Russian authorities cracked down on political organizations writ large and sought ways to curtail their growth. There were many members of the First State Duma who desired to continue reforms for the Russian state, and as proposals emerged from the Duma that sought to push political reforms to what some representatives considered their logical conclusion, Tsar Nicholas II and his ministers grew increasingly alarmed. “Although the Tsar and several of his more important advisers had entertained the likelihood of dissolution from the moment the election results were known,” historian Abraham Ascher wrote, “they had been reluctant to undertake so drastic a measure,” particularly in the earliest days of the session. Within very short order, both sides clashed over the question of land, with the Duma wanting to transfer crown, church, state, and estate lands to peasants and the government declaring such lands inviolable.<sup>511</sup> The Duma did not last two months before Nicholas dissolved it.

Many liberals saw the shocking reassertion of the tsar’s political authority as a harbinger of things to come. For both liberals and revolutionaries, the Nicholas II’s treatment of the Second State Duma simply confirmed the tsar’s undisguised antipathy towards organized politics and

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<sup>510</sup> Sazonova and Matveev, *Istoriia Tomska*, 198; Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 175.

<sup>511</sup> For a good, brief examination of the short life of the First State Duma, including the initial debates over land reform, see Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, Volume 2, 81-110; quotation found on pg. 195.



national political reform. After the First State Duma had been dismissed, those more radical groups—the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks, and the Socialist Revolutionaries—that had boycotted the elections to the first Duma changed their stance and actively campaigned for election to the State Duma. In Siberia, Kadets and Socialist Revolutionaries worked with progressives and regionalists, resulting in the election of a Kadet (university professor Nicholas Rozin) and a local lawyer and member of the Tomsk City Duma (Vologodskii) to the Second State Duma in 1907.<sup>512</sup> The Russian government applied pressure to try and shape the composition of the Second Duma, but once the elections were concluded, the number of Second State Duma members from the more radical parties outnumbered the number from the Kadets.

The Second Duma lasted from 20 February 1907 to 3 June 1907, and in its short life, the Second Duma clashed with Nicholas II and his new Prime Minister, Petr Stolypin. Some members of the Duma met at the home of Prince P.D. Dologorukov and elected a political non-entity, F.A. Golovin, as the president. The land question still lingered from the First Duma, and the newly appointed Stolypin and the Second Duma could not come to an agreement on land reform. Before the Duma could properly consider the proposed land reforms, he accused the Social Democrats of preparing for an armed uprising against the state. When the Duma refused Stolypin's request that fifty-five Social Democrats be excluded from the Duma and that sixteen of them be stripped of their parliamentary immunity, Stolypin convinced Nicholas II to dissolve the Duma, which he did by imperial decree on 3 June. On the same day, the government utilized this crisis to change the electoral laws (the now-infamous Electoral Law of 3 June 1907) in an effort to guarantee a pliable majority to the Third State Duma. As the government could not pass

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<sup>512</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 175. Vologodskii's diary from the revolutionary and Civil War period has been translated into English. It also contains a very good introduction to his life in Tomsk and his associations with people like Potanin: Vologodskii, *A Chronicle of the Civil War in Siberia and Exile in China*. See pages 13 and 14 for a brief summary of the 1907 Duma elections.

a law without the approval of the Duma, the decision to change the electoral law was seen as a Stolypin coup d'état (the Coup of June 1907).<sup>513</sup>

Kadets in Tomsk published articles in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* decrying the government's 3 June Coup d'Etat. In one article, the author lamented that such a "response undermines the most conservative wings of hope." In another article, titled simply "Results," the editors of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* concluded: "Revolutionary ardor has passed [and] extreme revolutionary enthusiasm has smoothed itself out as the idea took a more realistic direction. Under the influence of inexorable reality, vague dreams took the form of certain ideals that thought of something as necessary, without which it is impossible to live and develop. Meanwhile an active Russian life in the sense of improving the Russian system has stopped."<sup>514</sup> The government's actions produced the hoped-for results. The Third Duma, elected in 1907, proved far more pliable, and the government inaugurated a period in which political parties and local political groups such as regionalists struggled to advance their goals.

Understandably, the coup d'état significantly weakened Russia's newly formed political parties. Government agents infiltrated the more radical political parties and significantly undermined them, and internal ideological squabbles and philosophical disagreements with other parties kept them internally divided. Socialist Revolutionaries and Socialist Democrats found their political positions severely compromised. While membership in Siberia's Socialist Revolutionary Party grew, the party found itself infiltrated by the Russian government and

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<sup>513</sup> For more information on the Second State Duma, the clash with Petr Stolypin, and the subsequent coup d'état, see Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905*, Volume 2, 291-368.

<sup>514</sup> Some of the editorial articles in *Sibirskaya zhizn'* can be taken as good examples of this despair: see several editorials from (19 October 1908), Number 224; "Itogi," (11 January 1909), Number 8, page 2 as a short sample.

wracked by internal divisions that significantly weakened the movement.<sup>515</sup> Socialist Revolutionaries, however, did what they could to nurture a working relationship with regionalists in the period between the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917.<sup>516</sup> The Russian government repressed so many political organizations in the aftermath of 1905, and SRs, Mensheviks, Bolsheviks, and other political groups found themselves forced almost exclusively towards underground activity. Even non-political liberal groups like the regionalists struggled to function in a fluctuating political environment.

During the reactionary period following the Revolution of 1905, Potanin and the regionalists, although they were officially non-political, suffered a series of setbacks courtesy of the Russian government, as well. Writing to Tasia Mikhailovna Farafontova in late 1908, Potanin lamented how Karl Stanislavovich Nol'ken, who had been appointed governor of the Tomsk guberniia in October 1905, had shut down some key institutions throughout the city. Specifically, Nol'ken had shut down various school societies, Sunday schools, and lecture groups (in other words, elements that regionalists depended upon for promulgating their views), and the politically minded people within the city had remained silent either at the request of their leaders or because they were, on an individual level, afraid of what might happen if they spoke against the governor. According to *Sibirskie voprosy*, "The searches, arrests, and deportations of persons related to the cultural and educational activities of a public nature have been quite commonplace in Siberia today."<sup>517</sup> This reactionary period in the city's political life lasted little more than three years.

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<sup>515</sup> Afanas'ev, "Eserovskie organizatsii Sibiri v period revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg.," 160. For a summary of SR fortunes during and following the Revolution of 1905, see Cherniak, *Eserovskie organizatsii v Sibiri v 1917—nachale 1918 g.*, 26-39.

<sup>516</sup> Cherniak, *Eserovskie organizatsii v Sibiri v 1917-nachale 1918 gg.*, 27-28; 37.

<sup>517</sup> Author simply listed as "L," "Plody 'uspokoeniia'" *Sibirskie voprosy* Nos. 33-34 (25 October 1908), 2.

After three years of Nol'ken as the governor, the Russian state appointed a new governor—Nikolai L'vovich Gondatti—and according to Potanin, “after three years of cultural famine,” Tomsk “suddenly turned into a real intellectual capital of Siberia.”<sup>518</sup> Regionalists such as Potanin hoped to utilize the revival of the intellectual life of the city to promote regionalist ideas once more. With many political parties struggling, Potanin and other regionalists, much like they had in the late 1800s, hoped that the ideology and slogans of regionalism would appeal to liberal groups in Siberia and serve as a means of unifying the region's liberal intelligentsia. Potanin believed that with Gondatti as governor and the region experiencing increasing political stability, regionalist ideology could provide the intellectual glue that would hold regional political parties together on questions of local advancement.

This vision of fostering Siberian development in relation to the rest of Imperial Russia had been at the heart of regionalism since its inception. Starting in the 1860s, regionalists like Potanin and Iadrintsev focused on developing the tools they deemed vital for fostering Siberian evolution. Although the Russian government had folded regionalism into the broader camp of Russian radicalism in the mid-1860s, interpreting regionalism as a movement that sought to separate Siberia from the empire, regionalists argued that they were merely proponents of the region and its importance within the empire. Emerging from exile, Iadrintsev and Potanin built an ideology for regionalism based upon their hopes for the future of Siberia and their disappointment in the Russian state and its policies. In the wake of the three hundredth anniversary of Russia's colonization of Siberia, and while Iadrintsev—the key ideological voice for regionalism during the 1870s and 1880s—continued to write about how Siberia still represented a colony in the minds of Russians, Potanin wrote about the tasks necessary to sever

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<sup>518</sup> Potanin to T.M. Farafontova, September-December 1908 (date unclear), *Pis'ma G.N. Potanina*, Volume 5, 95-96.

those colonial ties and to create a closer relationship between Siberia and European Russia.<sup>519</sup> By the Revolution of 1905, Potanin's views had undergone something of a transformation, moving from the colonial vision of Siberia, which could only be couched in terms of liberation and political independence, towards local autonomy and self-government based upon the realization that the Russian government had started to place importance on the region and its development. The 1905 Revolution, however, had revived discussion of separatism and an independent Siberia, and it did so not just among regionalists but also among the various political parties within Siberia. Some parties gave consideration to the possibilities of Siberian autonomy, and Potanin hoped that the ideological heritage of regionalism could serve as the glue to hold various political currents within Siberia together. The basic trends among Siberia's liberal intelligentsia revealed that regionalism had the potential to play a supra-party and supra-class role in uniting Siberians.

There was very little political differentiation in Siberia following the 1905 Revolution, and this worked to the advantage of regionalists who wanted to unite the region on key questions. Potanin and the regionalists focused on political cooperation to strengthen the possibilities for educational improvement, agricultural and economic growth, and political development for Siberia, but Potanin still shied away from direct political action for the movement. He appealed to all Siberians, regardless of their political affiliation, to unite under a regionalist banner in the period between the 1905 Revolution and the February Revolution of 1917.

Uniting political currents under a broad, regionalist banner meant that Potanin had to work constantly to nurture associations with political parties that shared ideologies similar, but

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<sup>519</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Zavoevanie i kolonizatsiia Sibiri," in *Zapadnaia Sibir'*, vol. 11 of *Zhivopisnaia Rossiia: Otechestvo nashe v ego zemlianom, istoricheskom, plemennom, ekonomicheskom i v bytovom znachenii v 19 tomakh* (St. Petersburg: M.A. Vol'fa, 1884.) 48.

not always identical, to regionalism. Between 1907 and 1917, regionalists utilized a traditional element of their ideology to foster political associations: education. The government had established a university for Siberia in Tomsk, and regionalists hoped to work with students to promote a broader awareness of Siberia's needs. Students in Tomsk served as a focal point for multiple political parties and social movements. As the government established other institutes throughout the city to supplement the university, the city became an important educational center, and students became increasingly relevant politically. While regionalists had stressed the importance of education in Siberia, Socialist Revolutionaries and other political parties worked to educate students about their ideas. Socialist Revolutionaries and regionalists worked together to form the Siberian Student Circle in Tomsk, and even though the organization ultimately collapsed, the creation of the circle confirmed that SRs and regionalists could work together at certain levels. Similarly, regionalists worked with SRs, Populists, SDs, Kadets, and others in the Society for the Study of Siberia, another organization designed to raise awareness of regional needs.

Siberian regionalism, since its inception, had promoted the idea that Siberia was unique and had specific needs that only the inhabitants of the region could understand. The Society for the Study of Siberia emerged to promote these concepts. It is to the credit of regionalist ideology that multiple parties participated in the formation of the society in St. Petersburg in 1908. Members of the State Duma who participated in the founding of the society set the goal of educating Siberians about the necessity of change, especially the need for tailoring regional change to Siberian peculiarities. This vision spread throughout Siberia, and between 1908 and 1915, the society established departments in various Siberian cities, including Tiumen, Tobolsk, Omsk, Novonikolaevsk, Irkutsk, Mariinsk, and Iakut. Arguably the most important department

was that in Tomsk, as it was the only department of the society that carried out independent study of Siberia.<sup>520</sup>

In helping to establish the Tomsk department for the Society for the Study of Siberia, multiple political parties and social groups aimed to promote social reform and economic development for the region. Much like the St. Petersburg department, the Tomsk society consisted of multiple political and ideological groups that came together to solve the region's problems. Just to name a few groups and members within the Tomsk society, SRs and Populists (V.I. Anuchin, D.A. Klements, and P.V. Vologodskii); Social Democrats (M.K. Vetoshkin, F.N. Chilikin, T.O. Belousov); regionalists (Potanin, Adrianov, and P.M. Golovachev); Kadets (A.A. Kornilov, A.A. Kaufman, and A.I. Shingarev); and many others all carried out research on the region and sought ways to introduce reforms—such as the long-desired *zemstvo*—in Siberia.<sup>521</sup> The broad political foundation of the society was also important in light of regionalist ideology, as the society's goals reflected traditional elements of regionalism that united parties within the city.

Like regionalists at the movement's inception, members of the Society for the Study of Siberia wrestled with the key problem of how to promote their ideas in the absence of a press organ for their society. They attempted to develop *Sibirskie voprosy* as a journal devoted to problems unique to Siberia, but neither the society nor the journal survived for very long. The members tried to keep the society going, but the membership fees were prohibitively high, and departments started to close. By early 1912, the society was in crisis, and an article in *Sibirskie voprosy* from January 1912 remarked: "One cannot find the society's departments. One

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<sup>520</sup> D.I. Popov, "Obshchestvo izucheniia Sibiri i kraevedcheskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX veka," *Vestnik Omskogo universiteta* Number 3 (2004), 109.

<sup>521</sup> Popov's article provides an excellent, albeit brief overview of the Society for the Study of Siberia. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-111.

department is closed, another does not open, and a third exhibits separatist tendencies, not being in a position to track down the Central Society in St. Petersburg.”<sup>522</sup> Even though the society began to disintegrate and *Sibirskie voprosy* closed its doors in 1913, Potanin and regionalists had still made great strides towards converting aspects of regionalist ideology into a supra-party way of analyzing the problems of Siberia’s socio-political development.<sup>523</sup>

Though regionalists had collaborated with various groups, including Socialist Revolutionaries, to build the Society for the Study of Siberia, the cultural and economic vision that Potanin and the regionalists espoused for Siberia clashed with that of the SRs. Regionalists who had SR sympathies argued that Siberia’s inhabitants could work towards both—the cultural and economic development of Siberia within the Russian Empire and revolution. Even though conflicting trends within these two groups made cooperation difficult, in the period between the 1905 Revolution and those of 1917, SRs and regionalists did work together to foster Siberian interests writ large.<sup>524</sup>

Changes within Siberian society following the 1905 Revolution, while not engendering political distinctions, nurtured more clearly defined social and economic groups within the region, a development that compelled regionalists to adjust their appeal in order to reach broad segments of the society. To do so, Potanin argued that regionalism served all Siberians, not just the liberal intelligentsia. In the literary journal *Sovremennyi mir*, a local Social Democrat, M.K. Vetoshkin, published an article, “Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo,” in which he charged that Siberian regionalism represented nothing more than the narrow interests of Siberia’s bourgeoisie.<sup>525</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> “Nel’zia-li bez barabannogo boia?,” *Sibirskie voprosy* Nos. 1-2 (14 January 1912), 84.

<sup>523</sup> Aleksandr Vasil’evich Adrianov, “Sibirskie voprosy,” *Sibirskaia zhizn’*, No. 40 (17 February 1913), 4. Adrianov studied the periodical press in Siberia, and he followed the rise and fall of several newspapers and journals in *Periodicheskaiia pechat’ v Sibiri*.

<sup>524</sup> Matveev, *Studenty Sibiri v revoliutsionnom dvizhenii*.

<sup>525</sup> M.K. Vetoshkin, “Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo,” *Sovremennyi mir* No. 3 (1913).



Potanin countered Vetoshkin's assertion, arguing that, in fact, regionalism represented the best chance to unite Siberian society because the interests of the region's working class would certainly be closer to those of Siberia's merchants and intelligentsia rather than to those of St. Petersburg's workers.<sup>526</sup> Leonid Ivanovich Shumilovskii, a Menshevik from Barnaul and a contemporary of Potanin, echoed Potanin's claim in an article published in the unaffiliated newspaper *Zhizn' Altaia*, contending that everyone from the worker to the farmer, from the bourgeoisie to the urban *raznochintsy* was interested in the development of the region, the satisfaction of its cultural needs, and the construction of its economy.<sup>527</sup> While Potanin praised Shumilovskii, he argued that he would better serve the cause by fighting for Siberia's interests in the State Duma.<sup>528</sup> Potanin and many of his counterparts in various parties believed sincerely fulfilling the needs of the region required organs of self-government for Siberia. They also assumed that political action in the State Duma could accomplish the most for Siberia and hoped that the Siberian Parliamentary Group would work within the Duma to advocate for the region's needs.

The Siberian Parliamentary Group coalesced slowly during the First and Second State Dumas, as Siberian representatives came to appreciate that solving the region's problems and promoting its interests could not happen without the help of the Duma. The members of the Siberian Parliamentary Group collected materials on the life of Siberia, organized commissions and expeditions to study the region, and publicized discoveries about Siberia in publications and public lectures.<sup>529</sup> After the dissolutions of the First and Second State Dumas, the number of

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<sup>526</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "V omskikh tiur'makh," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 51 (9 March 1914), 3.

<sup>527</sup> Leonid Ivanovich Shumilovskii, "Utopiia?" *Zhizn' Altaia* (Barnaul) No. 278 (1912).

<sup>528</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Utopiia-li?" *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 22 (26 January 1913), 2.

<sup>529</sup> The journal *Sibirskie voprosy* typically contained summaries of the Siberian Parliamentary Group's activities. Just one example is: "V sibirskoi parlamentskoi gruppe," *Sibirskie voprosy* Volume 6, Number 1 (12 January 1908), pp. 42-45. This publication, an attempt at a revived, purely Siberian journal, began

Siberian deputies to the Third State Duma was cut in half—just fourteen members. Yet these few deputies united in an effort to coordinate activities within the Duma and relieve the pressure on their fellow deputies. Dominated by the Kadets, members of the Siberian Parliamentary Group gave speeches in the State Duma urging the agricultural and economic development of Siberia, the expansion of Siberia's infrastructure, and an increase in the region's representation in the Duma, among other programmatic aspects.<sup>530</sup>

Potanin and others concurred with much of what the Siberian Parliamentary Group urged for the region. Potanin had consistently argued that Siberia should be left to develop her agricultural system, a system that, he stressed, could be used to foster the further growth of Siberia's economy. Russia's industrialization drive, Potanin argued, had seen Siberia's raw materials transported to the metropole to pay for industrialization, further depriving the region of the means of economic development. Regionalists hoped that agricultural development would nurture other industries related to Siberian agriculture: dairy, meatpacking, flour, etc. This aspect of regionalist ideology stretched back to previous discussions of how Siberian development could be built upon the peasant commune; however, transformations in Russia's communal agricultural system now challenged this, as Stolypin's land reforms had the potential to damage the commune.<sup>531</sup> Potanin and the regionalists hoped that the Siberian Parliamentary Group could either stop the agricultural reforms posed by the government or ameliorate their most deleterious effects on the region. The transformation of agriculture in late Imperial Russia had a tremendous effect on Siberia.

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well but saw its subscriber base diminish following just prior to World War I. Ultimately, publication of *Sibirskie voprosy* ceased in 1913.

<sup>530</sup> Mosina, *Formirovanie burzhuazii v politicheskuiu silu v Sibiri*, 114. For a good summary of the Siberian Parliamentary Group's political make-up and activities, see Sergei Alekseevich Safronov, "Uchastie Sibirskoi parlamentskii gruppy v rabote III Gosudarstvennoi dume," in *Omskii nauchnyi vestnik* No. 2 (2012): 13-16.

<sup>531</sup> Potanin, "Nuzhdy Sibiri," 246.

Under the auspices of Prime Minister Petr Stolypin, the Russian government, in late 1906, allowed for the right of individual landownership. Stolypin, attempting to prevent peasant unrest that boiled over during the Revolution of 1905, sought to “wager on the strong and sober” peasants in the Russian countryside. This wager included opening up lands in Siberia and providing benefits for those peasants who chose to relocate east of the Urals. This prompted millions of peasants to relocate to Siberia—almost three million between 1906 and 1913.<sup>532</sup> Regionalists, SRs, Kadets, and others opposed the government’s actions. Potanin stated in 1906 that, “Justice demands that when addressing the issue of the exploitation of the Siberian lands, the interests not only of the metropole must be taken into account ... [but also] the interests of the old-timers of Siberia ....”<sup>533</sup> Potanin worried that the *novosely* would squeeze out the older peasants of Siberia. Potanin had consistently focused on unity among Siberians; however, he feared that the newcomers would ultimately divide the peasantry, a significant portion of Siberia’s population.

The conflict between old peasants and new arrivals prompted concerns among those hoping to unite Siberians politically, culturally, and socially and simultaneously revived old questions concerning Siberia’s place within the Russian Empire. In early 1908, the journal *Sibirskie voprosy* noted that the period represented one of the most serious moments in the entire history of the region. In particular, it noted that the government in “Trying to satisfy the land hunger of Russian peasants in their mass migration to Siberia has undoubtedly affected the interests of the old residents ....” Those people who sought the unity of the peasantry and hoped to avoid a clash of interests looked to the Duma, but the author of the article in *Sibirskie voprosy* was concerned that the non-Siberian members of the Duma had no respect for the region and

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<sup>532</sup> Serebrennikov, “Siberian Autonomous Movement and Its Future,” 404.

<sup>533</sup> Potanin, “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” 242.

were not averse to using Siberia as a way to “pay off the debts” incurred by European Russia.<sup>534</sup> Indeed, the author argued that the future for Siberia looked bleak, claiming that for centuries, Siberia had, at her own expense materially and morally, been “paying for the sins and crimes of the entire state” and now the central government was using the wealth of Siberia yet again as a way of slaking the demand for land from the peasants of European Russia.<sup>535</sup> To protect the region’s agricultural system, regionalists argued that Siberia needed a system of self-government that could defend the interests of the region’s inhabitants. Yet, because the Siberian contingent in the Russian State Duma was relatively small it seemed unlikely that the Siberian Parliamentary Group could alter the government’s direction; still, its members tried to convince the State Duma to introduce the *zemstvo* to Siberia.

In a series of articles and pamphlets, Potanin and regionalists traced the evolution of the regionalist movement, identifying regionalism as a means of securing autonomy for both Siberia and for other problem areas within the Russian Empire. Potanin wrote in *Oblastnitcheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri* that “This vast empire should be broken up into separate areas,” Potanin wrote, “even though connections between them could be maintained. [Russian division] should not be on ethnographic but on economic terms due to the fact that physical conditions in different regions of the empire are distinct.” Potanin went on to say that local institutions such as *zemstvos* within the region and a larger legislative body for Siberia such as a Siberian Regional Duma should manage broader regional economic questions while local concerns should be left in the hands of local authorities selected by Siberians.<sup>536</sup> Potanin was particularly concerned about the imperial government’s use of Siberian money to support itself. In an article in *Sibirskaiia zhizn’*, Potanin reiterated his call for the establishment of a regional Duma “to control expenditure of

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<sup>534</sup> “K tekushchemu momentu,” *Sibirskie voprosy* Volume 4, Number 7 (23 February 1908), 4.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>536</sup> Potanina, *Oblastnitcheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri*, quotation on 57, 61.

local finances.”<sup>537</sup> By framing his advocacy of regional autonomy in this way, Potanin hoped to mollify those political parties—like the Kadets—that looked upon the vivisection of the Russian Empire as anathema. Potanin saw the Kadets as potential liberal allies, and he did not want to propose an ideology that could alienate them.

This desire hearkened back to the proclamations and provisions that dated to the Revolution of 1905, not the least of which were the “Project for the Basic Principles and Provisions for *Zemstvo* Institutions in Siberia” and the “General Provisions of the Siberian *Zemstvo* System.” Various people collaborated in the composition of these proclamations, and the appeal rested upon a broad political base. Potanin and some regionalists believed that the emergence of the Kadets as a national political organization following the 1905 Revolution actually enhanced the possibility for establishing regional self-government.

On a national level, the leaders of the Kadet Party agreed that local rights, privileges, and powers should be enhanced. In their national political platform, Russia’s Kadets called for the creation of local government organizations to oversee elementary schools, public libraries, and public universities. This represented the kind of local control for which regionalists had advocated for decades.<sup>538</sup> The Kadet Party’s national platform also called for the establishment of “autonomy for local and regional representative assemblies that would have *the right to participate in the national legislative branch* ... according to the needs of the [local] population.”<sup>539</sup> The Constitutional Democrats, therefore, did not shy away from the question of regional autonomy but promoted the idea, insisting that “Local government should be extended

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<sup>537</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Budushchee sibirskoi oblastnoi tendentsii,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn*’ No. 65 (6 July 1907), 2.

<sup>538</sup> *Polnyi sbornik platform vcekh Russkikh politicheskikh partii: s prilozheniem Vyochaishogo Manifesta 17 oktiabria 1905 i vsepoddanneishogo doklada grafa Vitte* (St. Petersburg: Tipo-Litografiia A.G. Rozena, 1906), 67.

<sup>539</sup> *Ibid.*, 62. [Emphasis added.]

to all of the Russian state.” Furthermore, the Kadets argued that self-government should extend to all branches of local affairs—including control over local police and security forces.<sup>540</sup> This bolstered the potential for regional self-government. Moreover, in Siberia itself, local Kadets worked towards the region’s autonomy within the Russian Empire.

In November 1905—in the midst of the revolution—the Kadets of Tomsk—the largest Kadet organization in Siberia—had called for a provincial constituent assembly for the region. This appealed to regionalist philosophy, and in light of this, regionalists had turned towards closer cooperation with the Kadets.<sup>541</sup> Regionalists and Kadets both hoped for (and bristled at the failed realization of) regional autonomy. Both understood that Siberia was not alone in its need for regional self-government. Much like their regionalist counterparts, Kadets advocated for economic development in the region and the elimination of monopolistic tendencies in St. Petersburg’s dealings with Siberia.<sup>542</sup> Regionalists believed that the tsarist regime’s suppression of local interests represented a thread that ran throughout Russia’s association with Siberia, and following the 1905 Revolution, the belief that St. Petersburg could only suppress rather than support regional interests had begun to spread among other members of Siberia’s liberal intelligentsia.

After 1905, the tendency among Siberian liberals was to consider the local administration appointed from St. Petersburg a reactionary force bent on hindering regional development. This idea was in no way new, but it spread among Siberian liberals following the revolution.<sup>543</sup> The revolution had shown Siberia’s Kadets just how important *zemstvo* institutions would be for the

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<sup>540</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>541</sup> M.N. Sobolev, “Otnocheniia Sibirskogo oblastnogo soiuzia i konstitutsion-demokraticheskoi partii,” in *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* No. 233 (19 November 1905), 3.

<sup>542</sup> Kharus’, *Liberalizm v Sibiri nachala XX veka*, 16.

<sup>543</sup> V.V. Shevtsov, “Vopros o samoupravlenii Sibiri v period revoliutsii 1905-1907 gg.” *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* Number 4 (20) (2012), 139.

region. Thus, much like their regionalist counterparts, Kadets saw the *zemstvo* as offering Siberia the opportunity for self-government, a regional court administration, local economic control, and educational development.<sup>544</sup>

In many respects, the Program of the Tomsk Kadet Party closely mirrored ideas espoused by regionalists for years: “The areas isolated by language, nationality, geography, and historical past must obtain regional autonomy with local representative agencies.”<sup>545</sup> In light of its desire for increased autonomy, the Kadet party organization proved a good match for regionalist ideology in the period between the 1905 Revolution and the February 1917 Revolution.

Traditionally, the Kadets have been depicted as bourgeois intellectuals, businessmen, and bureaucrats, but as historian Ol’ga Anatol’evna Kharus’ pointed out, the party’s appeal certainly proved wider than that. Kadets, according Kharus’, represented a broad segment of the liberal intelligentsia in Siberia.<sup>546</sup> In particular, the Kadets’ platform appealed to students in the institutes of higher education in Tomsk, and it shared broad affinity with regionalist ideology. “The desire to provide a compromise of different political forces in the interests of constitutional development, close contact with the sincere belief in the specific conditions of Siberia, as well as an awareness of the impossibility of centralized control in a country with a vast territory and socio-cultural fragmentation,” according Kharus’, “[formed the] basis of the ideological community of the local Kadets with the regionalists.”<sup>547</sup> Kadets and regionalists continued their

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<sup>544</sup> Kharus’, *Liberalizm v Sibiri nachala XX veka*, 126.

<sup>545</sup> Platform of the Tomsk Kadet Party quoted in Ol’ga Anatol’evna Kharus’, “Kadety y oblastniki: k voprosu o sootnoshenii politicheskikh pozitsii (1905-1917 gg.)” in *Iz istorii revoliutsii v Rossii (pervaia chetvert’ XX v.)* (Tomsk: Tomskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1996), 184-185.

<sup>546</sup> Ol’ga Anatol’evna Kharus’, “Kadetskie i oktiabristskie organizatsii v Sibiri: Opyt rekonstruktsii sotsiolkul’turnogo oblika,” *Istoricheskii ezhegodnik: Spetsial’nyi vypusk: Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Sibiri v nachale XX veka* (Omsk: Izdanie OGU, 1997), 32-33.

<sup>547</sup> Kharus’, *Liberalizm v Sibiri nachala XX veka*, 132-133.

association that had started in 1905—cooperation that had sought to bring *zemstvo* organizations to Siberia.

Although local Kadets called for regional autonomy and local self-government, Kadets did not support the dissolution of the empire. Yet, their position on Siberia made them potential allies with the regionalists. As one member of the Siberian Kadet organization—I. V. Nekrasov—argued, the region’s economic and cultural growth had to take place *within the Russian state*. Writing about the cultural and political problems of Siberia in a 1912 article published in *Russkaia mysl’*, Nekrasov reinforced this position, contending: “It is time for the government—as represented by its governing bodies—to understand that a culturally and economically strong Siberia is necessary for Russia as a whole, and that Siberia must naturally play an active part in the coming clash of the two cultures in the East . . . . [T]he entire population of the [Siberian] region, [needs] a strong awareness of its connection to the state, its civil rights, and obligations.”<sup>548</sup> Nekrasov noted that the overall perspective on regional issues and how government policies should tend towards decentralization, was “common for the Siberian intelligentsia.” He warned, however, that increasing calls for autonomy and decentralization from Kadet quarters should not imply that the Kadets advocated the vivisection of the Russian Empire.<sup>549</sup> The perspective of Siberia’s Kadets, therefore, reflected that of the national party organization, whose position on regional autonomy certainly dovetailed with the regionalist conception of autonomy. Although the nascent political parties and social movements had focused on *zemstvos* as a means of securing self-government during the 1905 Revolution, the years after the revolution found these same parties and movements focusing on the debate concerning the nature of a Siberian *zemstvo*.

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<sup>548</sup> N. V. Nekrasov, “Pis’mo o natsional’nostiakh i oblastiakh: Kul’turnye i politicheskie problemy Sibiri,” in *Russkaia mysl’* (February 1912) Volume 33, Number 2, 108.

<sup>549</sup> N. V. Nekrasov, “Iz sibirskikh vpechatlenii,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* No. 230 (19 October 1913), 2.



Various political and social groups questioned just what kind of *zemstvo* Siberia needed. Should it be based upon the *zemstvo* provisions of 1864, of those of 1890, or those spelled out during the Revolution of 1905?<sup>550</sup> In the wake of the new electoral law of 3 June 1907, however, the socio-political situation in the Russian Empire changed dramatically, and as the ensuing elections brought a far more conservative Third Duma into power, the discussions over *zemstvo* reforms for Siberia assumed an air of desperation.<sup>551</sup> Ultimately, Siberia's liberal intelligentsia came to believe that the *zemstvo* provisions of 1890—one that offered small *zemstvo* units spread throughout the region—would be the best alternative for Siberia. They also hoped that these smaller *zemstvo* units could be formed into a larger All-Siberian Union of *Zemstvos* as something of a legislative branch for the region.<sup>552</sup> The changes in Russia's government following the revolution meant that these liberals would need to work through the State Duma if they hoped to accomplish their goals. With radicals such as the Socialist Revolutionaries specifically excluded from the Third Duma, chances for pushing *zemstvo* reform through the Duma had been somewhat limited. Siberia's Socialist Revolutionaries had participated in previous discussions on how to implement *zemstvo* reforms for Siberia.<sup>553</sup> While radicals were excluded from the Third Duma and conservatism proved the order of the day, the Duma still had some liberals in its ranks. Those liberals who had struggled to form the Siberian Parliamentary Group during the First and Second Dumas saw the group play a vital role during the Third Duma, as, in late 1907 and 1908, as the Duma debated the nature of a Siberian *zemstvo* and attempted to determine the best fit for the region. As debates dragged on, however, group members came to the conclusion

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<sup>550</sup> See I.A. Malinovskii, "Nakanune zemstva v Sibiri," *Vestnik Evropy* Volume 45, Number 12 (December 1910), 292-304.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*, 295. Malinovskii was a member of the Law Society at Imperial Tomsk University with Potanin.

<sup>552</sup> Serebrennikov, "The Siberian Autonomous Movement and Its Future," 404.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, 403.

that it was “better to have some kind of *zemstvo* than to have nothing.”<sup>554</sup> In May 1908, therefore, the Siberian Parliamentary Group composed a plan designed to bring *zemstvos* to Siberia based upon the 1890 statutes.

On 23 May 1908, the Siberian Parliamentary Group, with the support of more than one hundred members of the State Duma, submitted a proposal for territorial self-government. It took until November before the Duma took up discussion on the matter, but once it did so and the proposal was deemed desirable, the Kadets in the Duma formed a subcommittee to try and develop the proposal into a working model for a Siberian *zemstvo* system.<sup>555</sup> The subcommittee ultimately took until the beginning of 1912 to edit the proposal, tailoring it to Siberia’s needs as determined by the subcommittee. While the Duma actually passed the subcommittee’s proposal for a Siberian *zemstvo* on 30 January 1912, the State Council gave the matter only a cursory discussion before rejecting it on 5 May 1912.

Brief editorials in Siberian newspapers either decried those deputies who did try and bargain with the State Council by weakening their demands for regional self-government or complained that Siberia’s requests were not judged on their merits before being rejected in a bureaucratic fashion.<sup>556</sup> According to Vasilii Ivanovich Anuchin, a regionalist in Tomsk, Siberians’ waiting for the autocracy to address local governance represented the height of futility.<sup>557</sup> As events turned out, even though Siberia’s liberals and regionalists sought to enact *zemstvo* legislation in the period from May 1912 through the early years of the First World War, they gained no discernable achievements during that time.

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<sup>554</sup> Malinovskii, “Nakanune zemstva v Sibiri,” 301.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., 303.

<sup>556</sup> *Novaia Sibir’* (Irkutsk) No. 15 (17 January 1913); *Sibirskaiia zhizn* No. 155 (16 July 1913) are good examples.

<sup>557</sup> Vasilii Ivanovich Anuchin, “Sibir’ v ee proshlom i nastoiashchem,” *Novaia Sibir’* (18 December 1912), 2.

Though residents of Tomsk marched in patriotic demonstrations supporting the tsarist government and the war effort, it did not take long, however, for the war's effects, like the ripples of a stone cast into calm waters, to reverberate throughout Russian society. Conscription affected the whole of Russian society, Siberia being no exception. By 1916 approximately 600,000 troops had been conscripted from the Tomsk region alone, a development that fostered socio-political unrest and a powerful protest movement.<sup>558</sup> Siberian liberals held a congress in Omsk in mid-April 1915 at which delegates extolled the necessity of *zemstvo* reforms for Siberia. Many of them published editorials in the Omsk newspaper *Sibirskii den'* (*Siberian Day*) that urged the government to introduce *zemstvos*. In Irkutsk, another congress in mid-April 1916 became more radical, but even these radicals believed that the cities of Siberia should work together towards *zemstvo* reforms and a Siberian Regional Duma.<sup>559</sup>

As the war dragged on, the tsarist government sent prisoners of war to the east, where they roamed the streets of cities like Tomsk looking for food. This injected even more radicalism into the debates concerning the necessity of autonomy for the region. Although discussions at the Irkutsk congress had been described as being far to the left of Kadet and regionalist discussions, they still focused on *zemstvo* reforms, a Siberian Regional Duma, and mutual support among key Siberian cities. On the liberal side, in the period between the 1905 Revolution and the February Revolution of 1917, regionalists and Kadets theorized about *zemstvo* reforms that would suit Siberia, and the Siberian Parliamentary Group proposed legislation for such reforms during the Third State Duma. The regionalists' desire to bring *zemstvos* to Siberia from 1907 to 1917 enjoyed no success, while their goal of becoming the voice of unity in the name of Siberia

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<sup>558</sup> Igor' Aleksandrovich Eremin, *Tomskaia guberniia kak tylovoi raion Rossii v gody Pervoi Mirovoi Voyny (1914-1918 gg.)* (Barnaul: Izdatelstvo Barnaul'skii gosudarstvennyi pedagogicheskii universitet, 2005), 260.

<sup>559</sup> M.B. Shatilov, "Oblastnoe stroitel'stvo," *Sibirskaia zhizn'* Number 94 (1 May 1916), 2.

became subsumed in the increasingly radical debates taking place throughout the region. Potanin sought ways to ameliorate the worst side effects of the increasing impotence of regionalism, and, naturally, he turned to publications.

Throughout the movement's history, regionalists had used periodicals for their own purposes, but the political shift to the right that started in April 1906 with the issuing of the Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire, in which Nicholas II referred to himself as the autocrat, made it increasingly difficult for regionalists to publish their articles. Even traditionally regionalist-oriented newspapers such as *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* had started to focus their energies on national questions more so than regional issues. Even an attempt to focus Siberians on purely regional questions via a special journal, *Sibirskie voprosy*, proved short lived (1905-1913).<sup>560</sup> With no proper regionalist outlet to shape the discourse on reform in the region, Potanin had to rely on his association with *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* to promote regionalist ideas. In 1910, Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov moved to Tomsk and started working as the head of the regional department of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*. His position there opened a door for Potanin to produce his memoirs in serialized form. Between 1913 and 1917, Potanin produced seventy-four articles that constituted his serialized memoirs. In these articles, he traced aspects of regionalism's development from the beginning of the movement through the crises it confronted in the early twentieth century.<sup>561</sup> These articles helped shape perceptions of the regionalist movement, its goals, and its methods. Unfortunately for the regionalist movement, Potanin's memoirs could not solve the deep problems afflicting Siberian society during the First World War.

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<sup>560</sup> Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, "O litse sibirskoi pečati," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* Number 36 (13 January 1913), 2; G.N. Potanin, "Intelligentsia i pečat' Sibiri," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* number 36 (13 January 1913), 3; Adrianov, "Sibirskie voprosy," 4.

<sup>561</sup> To find easily readable versions of Potanin's articles from *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, see Potanin, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri: Vospominaniia*, Volume 6: pp. 7-303; Potanin, *Literaturnoe nasledstvo Sibiri*, Volume 7: pp. 33-150.

In the period between the 1905 Revolution and the February Revolution of 1917, regionalists continued to promote their vision for Siberia. It is especially noteworthy that, after the Revolution of 1905, they relied ever more heavily upon cooperation with liberal political groups to propagate their ideas. Cooperating with multiple political parties, regionalists helped establish branches of the Society for the Study of Siberia throughout the region. Partnering with Kadets, they published articles that supplemented the history of the movement, marking a period in which regionalists—particularly Potanin—comprehended the value of constructing an appropriate history of the movement.<sup>562</sup> The lack of differentiation between political groups and the murky nature of political life in the region noted in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1905 did not change through the First World War. According to historian Mikhail Shilovskii, by the beginning of the First World War “[A]ll of the region’s political parties were in a state of permanent ideological, theoretical, and organizational crisis. Their structures almost completely collapsed.”<sup>563</sup> While the military crisis the First World War brought about a transformation in the socio-political life in many areas of the empire, “By the beginning February Revolution in 1917,” Shilovskii noted, “political groups in Siberia had no clearly-established party system in operation.”<sup>564</sup> The February Revolution would push regionalism in new and exciting directions,

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<sup>562</sup> Several members of the regionalist movement, not only Potanin, saw the value of presenting the history of the movement. Framing the members of the movement in a positive light began with the death of Iadrintsev in 1894. Potanin’s seventieth birthday celebration also brought about an appreciation of the man, his accomplishments, and his ideas, as regionalists produced works celebrating Potanin’s life. In the years immediately following the Revolution of 1905, Potanin produced many theoretical works that sought to clarify and strengthen regionalism’s political and philosophical position. Just to name a few of these works from this important period: *Oblastnicheskaia tendentsiia v Sibiri*, “Goroda Sibiri” and “Nuzhdy Sibiri,” “O grazhdanskikh pravakh” in *Sibirskaia zhizn’* Number 269 (16 December 1908), page 3, and, of course, the various collected articles that constituted Potanin’s memoirs from *Sibirskaia zhizn’*.

<sup>563</sup> Mikhail V. Shilovskii, “Politicheskie protsessy v Sibiri v period Pervoi mirovoi voyny (iul’ 1914-fevral’ 1917 g.)” *Voprosy istorii Sibiri XX veka* M.V. Shilovskii, ed. (Novosibirsk: Izdatel’stvo Novosibirskogo universiteta, 2005), 63.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

offering a real possibility for regional autonomy, a Siberian Regional Duma, and the potential for an independent Siberia.

## 7 CONCLUSION: INTO THE WHIRLWIND

Discussions concerning self-government in Siberia ceased to be academic in February 1917 (o.s.). The first rumors of the revolutionary events in Petrograd filtered into Tomsk on 1 March, and the editors of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* published a telegram from the Provisional Government in Petrograd, letting people in Tomsk know that the tsarist ministers had been arrested. Governor V.N. Dudinskii, through an article in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, asked the citizens of Tomsk to remain calm and to wait to hear from the tsar, but knowledge had already started to circulate throughout the city. On 3 March, however, the editors of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* published an article entitled "Rossiia na puti k novoi zhizni" (Russia on the Path to a New Life).<sup>565</sup> The next day, the governor announced that the tsar had abdicated. On 5 March, the governor himself was removed from power.

The overthrow of the tsarist regime fostered the rapid development of political discourse across Siberia, presenting in the process a real opportunity for regional self-government. Moreover, after the collapse of the tsarist autocracy, the Provisional Government introduced *zemstvos* to Siberia, giving the region the increased level of importance within Russia that regionalists had long desired. The arrival of the *zemstvos*, the development of intellectual life, and the dramatic transformation of political life in the region in the wake of the February Revolution meant that just as regionalists finally saw Siberia enjoying a proper place within the country, Russia under the Provisional Government offered regionalists and others the freedom to

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<sup>565</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriiia goroda*, 181; "Rossii na puti k novoi zhizni," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 49 (3 March 1917), 2.

explore regional autonomy or even independence. Throughout 1917, however, the emergence of the Committee of Public Order and Safety, the establishment of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies of the Tomsk Garrison, and the creation of the Provincial People's Congress left the city with multiple poles of political power, while various groups, in differing ways, sought to utilize the ideas of regionalism to justify their position and enhance their power.

The transformation of Russia wrought by the Provisional Government challenged the political associations that regionalists had built over the course of the previous decade. Since 1905, regionalists and Kadets had proven to be closely matched ideologically, and they worked together to try and bring the needs of Siberia to the attention of the State Duma. After Nicholas II's abdication, however, Kadets on the national level tended to focus on giving Russia a united governmental structure and shied away from increased autonomy for outlying regions. This drove regionalists into closer association with the Socialist Revolutionaries who proved willing to discuss regional autonomy and increased recognition for the Siberian *inorodtsy*. The regionalist-SR association proved a good match. As historian Norman G.O. Pereira notes, there existed similarities between the populist-agrarian ideology of the Socialist Revolutionaries and regionalist philosophy. Thus, although the SRs had no official relationship with regionalists at the beginning of 1917, that revolutionary year brought closer cooperation between the two groups.<sup>566</sup> Still, regionalists found no political party with which they could agree on all aspects of their platform, as regionalists and SRs, although they agreed on a federated state structure, clashed over the Socialist Revolutionaries' socialism.

As events turned out, the political upheaval of 1917 represented a final crisis for regionalism. As historian Mikhail Shilovskii notes, "Without waiting for orders from above, the

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<sup>566</sup> Pereira, "Regional Consciousness in Siberia before and after October 1917," 116. Pereira briefly analyzes Kadet attempts to "minimize the issue [of autonomy]" in dealing with regionalism.

individual committees [in cities throughout Siberia] began to act as authorities on the administrative-territorial level.”<sup>567</sup> When the first rumors about the February Revolution came to Tomsk in early March, citizens crowded around the newspaper offices and the city post office for any information. On 2 March, the Tomsk City Duma, in an attempt to maintain authority and to restore some level of stability, created a ten-member Temporary Committee of Public Order and Safety as the local organ of the newly founded Provisional Government.<sup>568</sup> Boris Gan, elected chairman of the committee, assumed responsibility for public order and security for the entire province. The committee was helped by the fact that the commander of the Tomsk Garrison supported it, and because the members of the committee enacted measures eliminating bread cards and allowing for the free sale of bread in the Tomsk, they eased the city’s food crisis that had been so exacerbated by the First World War and earned the support of the citizens of Tomsk. Moreover, by temporarily reducing the price of food for the citizens of Tomsk, the Committee of Public Order and Safety oversaw a relaxation of tensions within the city. The committee also sought to mitigate some of the most notorious decisions of the tsarist provincial government, such as releasing political exiles from governmental supervision and suspending the work of land surveyors, which had angered the peasantry. Finally, it scheduled elections for a Provincial People’s Congress to take place in mid-April.<sup>569</sup> Yet, even at this early point in its existence, the committee often clashed with Tomsk City Duma, leading members of the latter to ask the Provisional government to clarify the powers and the rights of the committee.<sup>570</sup> Conflict

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<sup>567</sup> Shilovskii, *Politicheskie protsessy v Sibiri v period sotsial’nykh kataklizmov*, 34.

<sup>568</sup> GATO, F. R-127, O. 1, D. khr. 2983, L. 394.

<sup>569</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 181-182.

<sup>570</sup> The Provisional Government appointed Professor Evfimii Luk’ianovich Zubashev as the Provincial Commissioner. Zubashev, a Kadet who had served as the head of the Tomsk Institute of Technology, had been expelled from the province for supporting student protests during the 1905 Revolution. The Provisional Government sent him to gauge the mood of political groups such as the Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies. Ultimately, Zubashev sided with the Tomsk City Duma over the question of



between the Provisional Government and the Committee of Public Order and Safety ensued, as the new Russian government understood that the system evolving in Siberia—temporary committees approving elections to provincial assemblies—was unregulated by the central government, and although locals claimed that these institutions were temporary (as they believed that local *zemstvos* and *dumas* were soon to come), the central government argued that it did not know whom to trust on the ground in Siberia.<sup>571</sup> The events of March in the city proved far from over, as a flurry of political activity engulfed the life of the city.

Soldiers and workers within Tomsk constructed their respective organizations in March as well. In early March 1917, the Tomsk Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies emerged and quickly assumed a position of prominence in the city.<sup>572</sup> The soviet also published an official newspaper beginning on 6 March—*Izvestiia soveta soldatskikh deputatov Tomskogo garizona*. While the soviet mainly focused on organizational questions related to the life of the garrison, it occasionally offered coverage of national political news.<sup>573</sup> The workers of Tomsk, although relatively small in number, established some thirty-two trade unions in March

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authority in the region, and he reported his findings to the Provisional Government. By the time he had assessed the situation, however, it was too late to cancel the planned elections to the Provincial People's Congress. See V.G. Kokulin, "Tomskoe gubernskoe narodnoe sobranie 1917 g.: Opyt regional'nogo parlamentarizma," *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: Istorii* No. 5 (2013), 65.

<sup>571</sup> D.S. Kozlova, "Transformatsiia organov vlasti i upravleniia v Tomskoi gubernii v period revoliutsii i grazhdanskoi voiny (1917-1919 gg.), *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* No. 399 (2015), 68.

<sup>572</sup> The coming of the First World War caused the ranks of the Tomsk Garrison to swell to approximately 62,000 men by March 1917, and those troops came together on 5 March to elect 114 delegates from the Tomsk Garrison, creating the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies. Extensive organizational work within the garrison preceded this step, and once it was carried out, an executive committee dominated by Bolsheviks played a key role in the political life of the city. Officers within the Tomsk Garrison also organized their own representatives on 9 March, with the purpose of rendering "all possible assistance to the consolidation of the new political system." See Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istorii goroda*, 184. For the quotation, see *Izvestiia soveta soldatskikh deputatov Tomskogo garizona* No. 1 (16 March 1917), 2.

<sup>573</sup> For a great example of the political tenor of the newspaper, simply take a look at a great article from the editors on the front page of the third issue. *Ibid.* No. 3 (21 March 1917), 1.

1917 and more than eighty before October 1917.<sup>574</sup> Workers organized the Tomsk Soviet of Workers' Deputies on 29 March 1917, but the Workers' Soviet proved weaker than the Soldiers' Soviet, as industrial enterprises in Tomsk were relatively small.<sup>575</sup>

Also, in the course of March 1917, Social Democrats, Socialist Revolutionaries, and anarchists in Tomsk revived their legal political associations.<sup>576</sup> Moreover, Ukrainians and Lithuanians established societies that undertook political activity in the city as well. Muslims and other minority religious groups held conferences and discussed their struggles within society.<sup>577</sup> Students and women saw opportunities for organizing politically and participating in the political life of the city expand dramatically.<sup>578</sup>

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<sup>574</sup> E.I. Cherniak and Vladimir Aleksandrovich Drobchenko, "Struktury grazhdanskogo obshchestva Tomsk v marte – oktiabre 1917 g.," *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta: Istoriia* No. 3 (2011), 41.

<sup>575</sup> Industry in Tomsk consisted of small craft enterprises. Large industrial concerns—factories employing more than 1000 employees—simply did not exist in Tomsk in early 1917. The Soviet of Workers' Deputies simply did not enjoy a base of support comparable to that of the Soldiers' Soviet. Prior to the union of these soviets, Tomsk workers mostly agitated for an eight-hour workday and better pay rather than political goals. Ultimately, these soviets would play a key role in the October 1917 Revolution. While the Mensheviks dominated the early iteration of the Soldiers' and Workers' Soviets, this changed over the course of 1917, and the combined soviet of Soldiers' and Workers Deputies would serve as a basis of Bolshevik power in the city. See Akachenok and Razgon, eds., *Sovety Tomskoi gubernii*, 38; Vladimir Aleksandrovich Drobchenko and E.I. Cherniak, "S"ezdy, konferentsii i soveshchaniia v Tomskoi gubernii kak pokazatel' obshchestvennogo-politicheskoi aktivnosti mass v marte-oktiabre 1917 g.," *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta*, No. 383 (2014), 100.

<sup>576</sup> Cherniak and Drobchenko, "Struktury grazhdanskogo obshchestva Tomsk," 40.

<sup>577</sup> For example, I came across several documents in the Tomsk Archives concerning activities of Muslims in the region. One example comes from the First Siberian Regional Muslim Congress, which influenced the First Siberian Regional Congress decision to establish a West Siberian Central Authority to manage the problems related to food shortages. *GATO*, F. R 552-1, o. 1, d. 2, l. 67-68. There are even some articles about the region's Muslim organizations. See *Golos svobody* No. 1 (25 March 1917), 3, for a brief example. For a scholarly (albeit brief) examination of Muslim organizations in the city of Tomsk, see F.A. Smetanin, "Tomskie musul'mane: organizatsiia kul'turnoi avtonomii posle fevral'skoi revoliutsii," in P.P. Rumiantsev, ed., *Voprosy istorii, mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii i dokumentovedeniia: Sbornik materialov X Mezhdunarodnoi molodezhnoi nauchnoi konferentsii (Tomsk, 16-18 April 2014)* Vypusk 10, Tom 2 (Tomsk: Izdatel'skii Dom Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2014), pp. 252-255.

<sup>578</sup> Students in the institutes of higher education in Tomsk in early March 1917 organized a representative council on 2 March. Their goal was to promote student interests in the city. Just two days later, a general student gathering took place in the city with approximately 2000 of the city's students taking part. Similar to their counterparts in the city's universities and institutes, students from secondary schools organized

In the midst of this increasing political activity in Tomsk, regionalist ideas came to dominate political discussions throughout Siberia. Historian Mikhail V. Shilovskii wrote of no less than five articles in one newspaper in which their authors, not all of whom were regionalists, espoused regionalist theories as goals for restructuring the political life of Siberia. Even in Petrograd, regionalists established an organization and published a paper to promote regionalist ideas in the capital.<sup>579</sup> The revolution caught everyone by surprise, and even regionalists such as Potanin, who focused on strictly regional issues from the movement's inception, found himself forced to elaborate issues not strictly related to Siberia. While regionalists had theorized about autonomy, during March and April 1917, Potanin and the regionalists who surrounded him worked on a practical program for realizing regional autonomy, and the Committee of Public Order and Safety's creation of the Provincial People's Congress offered an opportunity for Siberian autonomy.

Entrusted with setting up congresses throughout the provinces, counties, and cities, delegates to Provincial People's Congress carried out their tasks although the Provisional Government expressed concerns about elections to the Congress. Electoral turnout among citizens of Tomsk was high—sixty-seven percent, and Socialist Revolutionaries received sixty percent of the vote.<sup>580</sup> Convening in the Activity Hall of the Tomsk State University library on 20 April, the Congress carried out some necessary business, including electing an honorary

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their own student association in March 1917 as well. Similarly, women from Tomsk educational institutions that catered to women also established clubs and associations throughout 1917. While many groups took advantage of the opportunities available following the collapse of tsarism, the elections for the Provincial People's Congress represented the most important event in the political life of Tomsk in the first few weeks of the revolution. Cherniak and Drobchenko, "Struktury grazhdanskogo obshchestva Tomska," 40-41.

<sup>579</sup> Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 219-221.

<sup>580</sup> Cherniak and Drobchenko, "Struktury grazhdanskogo obshchestva Tomska," 42.

chairman—Potanin.<sup>581</sup> The Provisional Government's concerns only deepened once delegates to the Congress argued that everything within Tomsk province should be managed by the people of the province *and their elected representatives*. The implication was that the Congress should control provincial affairs. Members of the Congress furthermore asserted that the Congress should be subject exclusively to the authorities appointed by an All-Russian Constituent Assembly, which the Provisional Government had pledged to convene in the immediate aftermath of its assuming power.<sup>582</sup> In a series of proclamations on both sides, the crisis between the Provisional Government and the Provincial People's Congress in Tomsk escalated. Zubashev claimed that he was the representative of the central government with the powers of the former (now arrested) governor and that he had the charge to oversee the introduction of *zemstvos* in the province and to monitor the actions of local authorities.<sup>583</sup> The Congress countered that the region did not need a commissioner from the central government and demanded that Zubashev leave Tomsk. This conflict ended in Zubashev's resignation, and although the Provisional Government attempted to appoint I.B. Marshang as commissioner, local protests kept him from assuming office. Members of the Provincial People's Congress claimed that they welcomed an appointment from the central government but contended that if the Provisional Government insisted on exercising tight control over local affairs and appointing a representative of the old tsarist government to do so, then local representatives had the right to protest.<sup>584</sup> Ultimately, the Provisional Government and the Provincial People's Congress arrived at an agreement after Gan

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<sup>581</sup> "Tomskoe gubernskoe narodnoe sobranie," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 84 (22 April 1917), 3.

<sup>582</sup> Kokulin, "Tomskoe gubernskoe narodnoe sobranie 1917 g," 66.

<sup>583</sup> E.L. Zubashev, "Moia komandirovka v Sibir' (Vospominaniia o Fevral'skoi revoliutsii)," *Vol'naia Sibir: Obshchestvenno-ekonomicheskii sbornik* (Prague: Izdatel'stvo Ogshchestva sibiriaikov v Chsr, 1927), Number 2, 107-108.

<sup>584</sup> *GATO*, F. R-166, O. 1, D. 34, L. 46

traveled to Petrograd and, on 7 June, received an appointment as the Provincial Commissioner.<sup>585</sup>

The Congress then took up the question of convening a larger Siberian Regional Duma, an issue that divided the representatives.

Regionalists within the Congress found themselves siding with the Socialist Revolutionaries who urged the creation of a regional Duma. Social Democrats within the Congress, particularly the Mensheviks, were willing to allow for the convening of a regional Duma but not at the expense of creating centrifugal forces that could destroy the Russia. Kadets wanted a unified Russia and hoped to hold the nation together in the midst of the growing political crisis.<sup>586</sup> Ultimately, those political parties who sought increased local authority over Siberian affairs carried the day within the Congress.

On 18 May, the Provincial People's Congress took two steps to enhance local authority: it elected an eighteen-member Executive Committee headed by the aforementioned Gan, handing power over local affairs to the Committee; and it called for the convening of an All-Siberian Regional Congress to take place in early August.<sup>587</sup> Regionalists such as Potanin supported the decision to enhance local authority and to call for a broader Regional Congress in August, but the Provisional Government protested the Executive Committee's authority over Tomsk Province, especially following the adoption of *zemstvo* institutions for Siberia on 17 June 1917. As Gan, in his capacity as Provincial Commissioner, accepted the task of converting the

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<sup>585</sup> Ibid., F. R-549, O. 1, D. 12, l. 33. Historian D.S. Kozlova offered some evidence to show that the decision to appoint local leaders who understood local situations became normal for the Provisional Government over the course of 1917. However, the appointment of local leaders created problems for the central government because they often circumvented the interests of the Provisional Government. Kozlova, "Transformatsiia organov vlasti i upravleniia v Tomskoi gubernii," 69.

<sup>586</sup> "Tomskoe gubernskoe narodnoe sobranie (vechernee zasidanie 18 maia)" *Sibirakaia zhizn'* No. 117 (3 June 1917), 3.

<sup>587</sup> GATO, F. R-1138, O. 1, D. khr. 14, l. 25; Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe oblastnichestvo*, 227.

independent structures in the province into county- and city-level *zemstvo* institutions, the situation in the province continued to deteriorate.

Elections based on universal suffrage represented an attempt to unite the citizenry against the extreme right and extreme left political groups in Tomsk, hopefully restoring some stability; however, the beneficial effects of the change in government and the relaxation of rationing proved temporary. As the war continued, privations became unbearable for many of Tomsk's inhabitants. As industrial enterprises closed throughout the city, workers found it difficult to purchase the necessary food. A poor harvest in 1917 engendered both food shortages and price increases, and efforts to relieve these problems failed.<sup>588</sup> Problems created by privation and social unrest were exacerbated by amnestied convicted criminals flooding into Tomsk.

Of the amnestied felons who arrived in Tomsk, many entered military service in the Tomsk Garrison. Claiming that they were conducting "revolutionary searches," these soldiers engaged in looting and robbery. Provincial Commissioner Gan noted that the criminals had fostered deeper unrest among the citizenry, as they committed robberies, murders, and agitations for the expropriation of private property via mass looting.<sup>589</sup> On the night of 2-3 June, the Provincial and City People's Assembly *and* the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies issued a joint decision, declaring martial law in Tomsk. Subsequently, the government carried out the mass arrest of almost two hundred recently amnestied criminals. Simultaneously, class-based propaganda, which had been circulating throughout the city for months, began to fuel antagonism between the middle class and the workers.<sup>590</sup> As tensions between workers and the middle class threatened to erupt into violence during the summer, rumors of food hoarding,

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<sup>588</sup> For example, the Provincial People's Congress attempted to suspend grain exports from the province and enact price controls, but local farmers cut supplies to the cities, exacerbating an already bad situation. See Akachenok and Razgon, eds. *Sovety Tomskoi gubernii*, 21-24.

<sup>589</sup> GATO F. R-1138, O. 1, D. 2, L. 10.

<sup>590</sup> A.A. Anosov, "O 'terpimosti' slov.," *Sibirakaia zhizn'* No. 170, (6 August 1917), 2.

pogroms, and the threat of famine placed greater stress on the socio-political situation in Tomsk, prompting the population to grow weary with the democratic institutions in the city.<sup>591</sup>

The crescendo of discontent in Tomsk served as the backdrop for regionalist meetings and congresses that debated regional autonomy in the late summer, early autumn 1917. The question of autonomy had cropped up time and time again following the collapse of the tsarist regime. Kadets had organized a broader Siberian Congress that met in Tomsk from 30 April until 2 May 1917. Though the Congress officially supported the Provisional Government, the delegates discussed the question of Siberian autonomy and expressed their hope that the Constituent Assembly, once called, would adopt a federal republic government within which the constituent regions would enjoy broad autonomy and territorial self-government in the form of regional dumas.<sup>592</sup> Similarly, when formulating policy for the province, the Provincial People's Congress theorized about regional autonomy, borrowing heavily from regionalist ideology. A 10 May resolution from the Congress concluded:

Siberia, in view of its geographical isolation from European Russia, its vastness, and its special ethnographic, climatic, and other local conditions, should be given the widest possible rights of self-government. Without destroying its organic connection with the Russian Republic, Siberia must have its own All-Siberian Regional Duma, which will make laws relating to the internal life of Siberia. In matters of state, Siberia will obey the laws of Russia.<sup>593</sup>

Regionalism's influence can be detected in these statements, and yet, the movement was to become even more important as the revolution deepened during the summer and fall.

The growth of regionalism's importance emerged concurrently with the July Days in Petrograd. The failure of another Russian military offensive, the Kadets' resignation from the Provisional Government, and the privations of war saw soldiers and workers together with the

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<sup>591</sup> Akachenok and Razgon, eds. *Sovety Tomskoi gubernii*, 36.

<sup>592</sup> Drobchenko and Cherniak, "S"ezdy, konferentsii i soveshchaniia v Tomskoi gubernii," 101.

<sup>593</sup> *Protokoly Tomskogo Gubernskogo Narodnogo Sobraniia* (Tomsk: Gubernskaia Tipografiia, 1917), 119.

Bolsheviks attempt to seize power in Petrograd. The Petrograd Soviet refused to endorse the uprising and the Provisional Government moved quickly, bringing in loyal military units to crush the uprising.<sup>594</sup> On 12 July, the Tomsk section of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party, in response to the violence in Petrograd, officially opposed the Provisional Government's actions and called for the establishment of a peasant and proletarian government responsible to the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies.<sup>595</sup> Tomsk Social Democrats also planned a protest for 14 July, which drew approximately 12,000 people.<sup>596</sup> The growing appeal of the Bolsheviks' ideas among the disaffected and dissatisfied groups within Tomsk prompted many political parties to focus on regionalist ideology as a remedy to increasing political radicalism.

After the July Days, regionalists and their ideology assumed increased importance in the political life of Tomsk, as they sought to unite the democratic elements within the city into an anti-Bolshevik force.<sup>597</sup> The Bolshevik-driven protests in Tomsk prompted a sharp reaction from Potanin. In an article in *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, Potanin discussed the federalist concept represented by the upcoming All-Siberian Regional Duma scheduled to meet in early August, proclaiming that "The idea of a Siberian Regional Duma ... [was] unacceptable to the Bolsheviks." Thus, because the idea of an All-Siberian Regional Duma represented a high ideal for regionalists, Potanin argued that, "Siberian regionalists have to fight against the Bolsheviks." He asked the readers: "But who would believe that the Bolsheviks could cast fetters on the Russian state?" He urged Siberians not to discount the possibility. "Russian life," he asserted, should Lenin's program be realized, "would find itself in an iron grip, and there would be no place either for the self-

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<sup>594</sup> Rex Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 181-186.

<sup>595</sup> "Iz mira truda, V Tsent. Biuro professional'nykh soiuзов," *Znamia revoliutsii* No. 38 (16 July 1917), 3-4.

<sup>596</sup> Cherniak and Drobchenko, "Struktury grazhdanskogo obshchestva Tomskai," 44.

<sup>597</sup> Drobchenko and Cherniak, "S"ezdy, konferentsii i soveshchaniia v Tomskoi gubernii," 102.



reliance of individuals or for the independence of public organizations.”<sup>598</sup> Several weeks later, the editor of *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, Adrianov, echoed Potanin's anti-Bolshevik call: “Yes, we are the implacable enemies of Bolshevik anarchism; we believe all the activities of its representatives threaten the loss of our fatherland.”<sup>599</sup> Regionalists and some political parties in Tomsk pinned their hopes on the All-Siberian Regional Congress to counter the threat posed by Bolshevism.

The proposed All-Siberian Regional Congress, which opened on 2 August, saw only sixty-three delegates arrive in Tomsk, with forty-six of those delegates from Tomsk Province. Consequently, the delegates opted to turn the Congress into a regional conference that proceeded to promulgate a “Decree of the Siberian Conference of Social Organizations on the Question of the Autonomous Structure of Siberia.” This decree called for independent governmental organizations in Siberia. Members of the conference then elected a committee chaired by Potanin to organize the convening of the First Siberian Regional Congress in October.

Potanin sent invitations to twenty political and social organizations throughout Siberia and invited approximately five hundred individuals to the upcoming Congress, but when the First Siberian Regionalist Congress met in Tomsk on 8 October 1917, only about 180 delegates attended. Almost immediately, those delegates squabbled over the question of regional autonomy.<sup>600</sup> In the course of discussions, SRs and regionalists came out in favor of Siberian autonomy, while SDs and Kadets steadfastly opposed regional autonomy. Two members of the small but vocal group of Kadets declared, “[W]e will strive not to destroy the body of the state.”<sup>601</sup> Additionally, Kadets protested the socialist orientation of the SR-dominated congress. When Potanin—the champion of regional autonomy—was elected to chair the Executive

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<sup>598</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, “Oblastnichestvo i diktatura proletariata,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No 153 (18 July 1917), 3.

<sup>599</sup> Aleksandr Vasil'evich Adrianov, “Im' moi otvet,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* No. 164 (30 July 1917), 4.

<sup>600</sup> *GATO*, F. R-552, O. 1, D. 2, L. 82.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, F. R-552, O. 7, D. 8, L. 6.

Committee, the Menshevik delegation departed the Congress, claiming that prominent positions given to “bourgeois ideologues” like Potanin revealed the biases inherent in the Congress.

The politically truculent Potanin, who had consistently striven to separate politics from regionalist ideas, understood that he had no choice but to cultivate political associations within the Congress if he hoped to have serious discussions concerning autonomy. While Potanin did not agree with the socialist elements of their political philosophy, the Socialist Revolutionaries offered the only real alternative if regionalists hoped to acquire regional autonomy.<sup>602</sup> For Socialist Revolutionaries, an association with regionalism offered them the opportunity to strengthen their position in the First Regionalist Congress.<sup>603</sup> Working together, regionalists and SRs pushed through a “Statute on the Regional Administration of Siberia,” which entrusted the Congress with the task of fostering Siberian development “based on national or territorial autonomy.”<sup>604</sup> The Congress declared itself the highest authority in the region and made clear that its members would seek increased regional autonomy for Siberia within the Constituent Assembly, which was expected to convene towards the end of 1917. As the debates between delegates to the Congress should indicate, between the convening of the All-Siberian Regional Congress in August and the of the First Siberian Regional Congress on 8 October, distinctions between political parties in Tomsk came into ever sharper focus.

In the immediate aftermath of tsarism’s collapse, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks in Tomsk had united their activities in an effort to exert more influence on the political life of the *oblast*. The summer put a tremendous strain on this working relationship, however. In the wake of the Kornilov Affair, Lenin set the Bolsheviks on a path towards seizing power in Petrograd. Although there was some debate among Tomsk Bolsheviks, Nikolai Nikolaevich Iakovlev

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<sup>602</sup> Pereira, “Regional Consciousness in Siberia before and after October 1917,” 118-119.

<sup>603</sup> Shilovskii, “Pervyi sibirskii oblastnoi s”ezd,” pp. 53–55.

<sup>604</sup> *Pervyi sibirskii oblastnoi s”ezd*, 1.

summed up the party position succinctly: “Power needs to be in the hands of the soviets.”<sup>605</sup> This proclamation, coming as it did on the eve of the Provincial Conference of the Tomsk Social Democratic Party, only further strained the working relationship between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, and following the Provincial Conference, which ran from 8 to 9 September 1917, the two groups broke relations in the province.<sup>606</sup> The separate Workers’ and Soldiers’ Soviets merged on 19 September 1917, giving a larger amount of power to the group that could control this united organization.<sup>607</sup> The Bolsheviks in the city organized, agitated, and propagandized leading up to the local elections, and thus, when elections for the Tomsk City Duma occurred on 1 October, they garnered some thirty-two percent of the votes, and thereby became the largest single party in the city government.<sup>608</sup> Bolshevik participation in the city government was nothing new. Multiple parties—the Bolshevik Party included—took part in the formation of the Committee of Public Order and Safety and the Provincial People’s Congress. Iakovlev played a key role in the Committee for Public Order and Security, and after the elections in the autumn of 1917, he became one of the most important members of the Bolshevik Party in Tomsk.<sup>609</sup> In the course of the summer, with the Bolsheviks gaining strength in the city, the once murky political boundaries between political factions within the city became more clearly defined, with one faction consisting of Socialist Revolutionaries, regionalists, and other political parties being driven together by the increasingly powerful Bolsheviks. Regionalism took on increased importance once the Bolsheviks seized power in late October, and Socialist Revolutionaries and

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<sup>605</sup> “Sovet Sold. Deput. Tom. Garis: 2-go sentiabria 1917 g.,” *Znamia revoliutsii* No. 81 (7 September 1917), 3.

<sup>606</sup> Akachenok, et al., eds., *Bor’ba za vlast’ Sovetov v Tomskoi gubernii*, 107-113.

<sup>607</sup> Dmitrenko, ed., *Tomsk: Istoriia goroda*, 187.

<sup>608</sup> “Sostav novoi Tomskoi gorodskoi dumy,” *Sibirskaiia zhizn’* No. 217 (6 October 1917), 3.

<sup>609</sup> Pugachev, “Nikolai Nikolaevich Iakovlev,” 300-301.

regionalists utilized regionalist ideology in an effort to organize political and military resistance to Bolshevik power.<sup>610</sup>

Following the October 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the citizenry of Tomsk proved divided. Pro-revolutionary meetings took place throughout the city (in the Tomsk Garrison, for example), but the liberal intelligentsia, especially the Kadets, who utilized *Sibirskaiia zhizn'*, attacked the Bolshevik coup. Even the Tomsk Bolsheviks themselves proved divided over the question of Bolshevik power, and thus, while they created a Revolutionary Committee on 26 October 1917, they did not declare soviet power in Tomsk. In November 1917, the Bolsheviks of Tomsk debated whether they should take power, regionalists and Socialist Revolutionaries prepared for an All-Siberian Extraordinary Congress of Delegates to meet in Tomsk to try and counter the emergence of Bolshevik power.

Meeting from 7 to 15 December 1917, the All-Siberian Extraordinary Congress was dominated by the Socialist Revolutionaries who hoped to create a new governing body for Siberia—the Siberian Regional Duma. Designed by the SRs to counter Bolshevik power in Siberia, regionalists saw the Duma as an opportunity for an autonomous Siberian government.<sup>611</sup> The Congress adopted several resolutions, including one that sought to create a socialist government for Siberia based upon SR ideology.<sup>612</sup> Naturally, the Bolsheviks opposed both the convening of the All-Siberian Extraordinary Congress and any attempt to establish a Siberian Regional Duma, but surprisingly Potanin, Adrianov, and Serebrennikov—men who participated in the Congress on behalf of the regionalists—also protested the Congress's decisions, including

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<sup>610</sup> Susan Zayer Rupp, *The Struggle in the East: Oppositional Politics in Siberia, 1918*, The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies Number 1304 (August 1998), 1-2.

<sup>611</sup> Pereira, *White Siberia*, 48.

<sup>612</sup> E.I. Cherniak, *Politicheskie partii v Sibir' (mart 1917-noiabr' 1918): S"ezdy, konferentsii, soveshchaniia* (Tomsk: Tomskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, 1993), 17; "Chrezvychainyi obshche-Sibirskii s"ezd," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* Number 272 (15 December 1917), 3.

that to exclude propertied classes from participating in the elections to the proposed Duma. Nevertheless, elections were scheduled, and Potanin was nominated to lead the new Siberian Regional Duma, the opening of which was set for 8 January 1918. Potanin, however, sided with Adrianov and Serebrennikov's protests concerning who could vote in elections for the Duma, and in protest, he refused to take the position.<sup>613</sup>

Bolsheviks in Tomsk moved to assume power in the city before the All-Siberian Extraordinary Congress convened, and on 6 December, after the convocation of the West Siberian Union of Soviets and the arrival of new leadership in the city, the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in Tomsk issued a declaration "to the citizens of Tomsk," calling itself the true "representative of supreme soviet power in Tomsk."<sup>614</sup> Although the Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd forced the issue of Siberian autonomy and independence to the forefront of discussions in the Extraordinary Congress, the question remains whether these discussions represented a real attempt at autonomy or whether they constituted an attempt to foster resistance to Bolshevik power. Regionalists certainly looked at the Extraordinary Congress as an opportunity to foster regional autonomy, but instead, Potanin saw the slogans and ideas of regionalism utilized as an ideological weapon in the struggle against Bolshevism.<sup>615</sup>

As the Bolsheviks consolidated their power in Tomsk, they likewise had to deal with the lack of food, an economic crisis, urban crime and an unruly Tomsk garrison. Ultimately, the Bolsheviks demobilized the garrison, which left many of these people free to form the core of the anti-Bolshevik military resistance in the region. The Bolsheviks then fashioned the Tomsk Red

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<sup>613</sup> Grigorii Nikolaevich Potanin, "Po povodu moego otkaza ot predsedatel'stvovaniia v Sibirskom oblastnom sovete," *Sibirskaiia zhizn'* (12 January 1918).

<sup>614</sup> Akachenok, et al., eds. *Bor'ba za vlast' Sovetov v Tomskoi gubernii*, 182.

<sup>615</sup> I.A. Iakushev, "Fevral'skaia revoliutsiia i sibirskie oblastnye s"ezdu (K istorii oblastnogo dvizheniia v Sibiri)," *Vol'naya Sibir'* 2 (1927): pp. 13-40.

Guard unit from the workers and students, utilizing the guards to maintain relative order in the city until early 1918, when the Bolsheviks incorporated them into the Red Army.<sup>616</sup> The Bolsheviks also had to determine what to do about the upcoming meeting of the Siberian Regional Duma.

In January 1918, the first delegates to the Siberian Regional Duma began trickling into Tomsk. Potanin had already stepped down, believing that the Socialist Revolutionaries wanted to use him as a tool for rallying anti-Bolshevik resistance. Even without Potanin in the Duma, the Socialist Revolutionaries who dominated this body borrowed heavily from regionalist ideas to broaden its appeal, utilizing the slogan of “through an autonomous Siberia to the rebirth of a free Russia” to draw supporters. Even though it was scheduled to convene on 8 January, the Duma did not manage a quorum (one-third, or ninety-three delegates) until 21 January.<sup>617</sup> Once the Duma had a quorum, the Bolshevik government in Tomsk moved against it.

The Bolsheviks declared the Duma dissolved on 25 January, and on the night of 26 January, the Red Guard sealed the building and arrested delegates as they arrived in Tomsk. Subsequently, on the night of 28-29 January, approximately forty delegates who had escaped arrest hastily met and elected an emergency council under the leadership of Ivan A. Iakushev and a Provisional Government of Autonomous Siberia under the leadership of a young, non-Siberian SR Petr Ia. Derber. They also decided to move the government from Tomsk to Omsk, which would become, albeit temporarily, the capital of “white” Siberia.<sup>618</sup> The PGAS organized armed resistance to the Bolsheviks. Eventually, the SR-dominated PGAS would move to Vladivostok,

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<sup>616</sup> *Znamya revolyutsii* (23 February 1918).

<sup>617</sup> Akachenok, et al., eds. *Bor'ba za vlast' Sovetov v Tomskoi gubernii*, 182.

<sup>618</sup> Pereira, *White Siberia*, 51.

surviving until 18 November 1918, when a coup d'état brought Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak to power as a military dictator.<sup>619</sup>

Throughout the previously described events, regionalism served as the common thread. Historian Mikhail Viktorovich Shilovskii recounts events in Novonikolaevsk during which *Svobodnaia Sibir'*, a paper launched in the wake of tsardom's collapse, published a report on a meeting of Siberian Federalists, whose discussions would sound familiar to regionalists. They considered Siberia an isolated region inhabited by a special cultural type of Russian. They also stated that the region, as colonized by peasants, political exiles, and convicts, represented a socio-economic entity distinctly different from European Russia. Similarly, they saw Siberia as a colony that had been exploited by the center and argued that the only way to solve the problems inherent in Siberia's secondary status was the creation of a regional Duma that could defend local interests.<sup>620</sup> Regionalist concepts dominated the discussion among these Siberian Federalists, and regionalism also played a key role in the governing bodies in Tomsk *oblast'* throughout 1917.

When the Committee of Public Order and Safety was created, Potanin became an important member. Potanin presided over the establishment of the Provincial People's Congress that followed soon thereafter. In this Congress, regionalists played a vital role, fashioning policies and proposals concerning regional autonomy while working with Socialist Revolutionaries. Potanin and other regionalists served in the All-Siberian Extraordinary Congress in December 1917, and when this Congress chose to create a Siberian Regional Duma, its members selected Potanin to lead the Duma. Potanin eventually saw his regionalist vision for

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<sup>619</sup> Shilovskii, "Sibirskaya oblastnaya Duma." For an analysis in English, see the introduction to Vologodskii's *Chronicle*. Vologodskii, *A Chronicle of the Civil War in Siberia and Exile in China*, Volume 1, pp. 7-76.

<sup>620</sup> Shilovskii, *Sibirskoe Oblastnichestvo*, 220.

Siberia hijacked by the Socialist Revolutionaries (at least in his mind) and used as a tool of Siberia's anti-Bolshevik resistance. Even in midst of the Russian Civil War, Potanin remained one of the most influential leaders in the region, publishing articles and pleading with the inhabitants of Siberia to hold fast to the idea of regional self-government.

This summary cannot do justice to the tremendous upheaval in Tomsk during 1917 or the vicissitudes in the regionalist experience of 1917. If events conspired to push regionalists in various directions from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s, then the events of 1917 created an explosion in the number of factors, pushing regionalism in new, exciting, and even dangerous directions. No less so, the Russian Civil War that followed the Bolshevik seizure of power revealed how important regionalist ideology had become. As historian Janet Hartley points out, "The rapid assertion of authority by the Bolsheviks after October 1917 illustrated not so much their strength ... as the impotence of their opponents in resisting them."<sup>621</sup> In light of the weakness of the anti-Bolshevik groups in Siberia, the language, slogans, and ideology of regionalism offered a way of uniting seeming disparate groups. Socialist Revolutionaries, Kadets, and rightists would come to utilize elements of regionalism to rally support to their causes in the course of the civil war.

The regionalist movement established by Iadrintsev and Potanin in the early 1860s did not survive the Russian Civil War. Still, the movement enjoyed a long life, and that longevity can be attributed to the overall lack of political distinctions within the Russian Empire at the close of the nineteenth century. As boundaries grew sharper politically in the early twentieth century, so did the political divisions within regionalism itself, as evidenced by the contrast between the liberal and Populist wings of the movement. Siberian regionalists had sought to create an identity that would rally Siberians behind the regionalist vision; however, members of

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<sup>621</sup> Hartley, *Siberia: A History of the People*, 189.



the movement did not attempt to fashion it into a political movement. Thus, an analysis of Siberian regionalism reveals a shared trajectory with Russian liberalism in the late nineteenth century.

Liberals, particularly those of Russia's State School, focused on political progress as fostered by the Russian government, and the Great Reforms, particularly *zemstvo* reform in European Russia, convinced many liberals that the Russian state could fulfill their desire for a "conservative liberalism" that would evolve into a constitutional monarchy. Such a vision, however, depended on the Russian state's continued support for further reforms. Unfortunately for Russian liberalism in the late 1800s, the tsarist regime proved unwilling to pursue the reforms that they envisioned as necessary for transforming the autocracy into a constitutional monarchy. Indeed, growing resistance from the state pushed Russian liberals to focus on informal social, educational, and cultural work, which would, they hoped, prepare Russians for participation in a constitutional monarchy. Much of this work took place among *zemstvo* members and members of professional organizations.<sup>622</sup>

Regionalists shared many of the same experiences, but they did not have the benefit of a Siberian *zemstvo* organization. Therefore, they focused on nurturing the Siberian intelligentsia and establishing grassroots social organizations to serve as a foundation for regional development. As regionalists refined their ideology, however, an intransigent government and unanticipated events forced them to search for new ways to accomplish their goals. In struggling to make the move from theoretical to practical solutions for regional development, regionalists had to contend with government reaction, the death of their chief ideologue, revolution, and

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<sup>622</sup> For more information, see Randall A. Poole, "Nineteenth-Century Russian Liberalism: Ideals and Realities," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* Volume 16, Number 1 (Winter 2015), pp. 157-181.

political transformations that ultimately resulted in the death of the movement, but not that of its ideas.

In Siberia today, regionalism is resurgent. The region's citizens still see the central government as something of a colonizer that pillages Siberia of its vast resources while keeping the region in a subservient position. As Elizabeth Peet wrote in an article for *The Wilson Quarterly* in June 2015, the increasing centralization of power in Vladimir Putin's Russia has prompted a revival of the ideas and rhetoric of regionalism, and the proclamation "I am Siberian" has become a source of pride among Siberians but not a source of power. Given time, however, Peet believes that this modern iteration of Siberian regionalism could reshape perceptions in Moscow by presenting the central government with a serious ideological framework for resistance to its centralizing efforts.<sup>623</sup> Opposition to the unequal relationship between Siberia and Moscow initiated in the late 1800s by Iadrintsev and Potanin was supplemented by their attempt to inculcate a Siberian identity in the residents of the region. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, people in the region are still attempting to fashion a Siberian identity, and in doing so, they have found a solid foundation in the language and ideas of regionalism. Stanislav Zakharin, citing information from historian Marina Zhigunova's article "Siberian as a New Nationality: Myth or Reality?," sees a steady increase in the percentage of people who identify themselves as "Siberian." When asked, "What would you call yourself," only fifteen percent of respondents between 1986 and 1988 answered "Siberian." As of the 2010 Russian census, however, approximately *seventy-five percent* of respondents self-identified as Siberian, with the strongest support for a Siberian identity found in the ethnically Russian regions of Siberia. Ideas started by regionalists in the late 1800s—the unequal relationship

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<sup>623</sup> Elizabeth Peet, "The Rise of Siberian Nationalism," *The Wilson Quarterly*, 1 July 2015, <http://wilsonquarterly.com/stories/the-rise-of-siberian-nationalism/> (most recently accessed on 16 June 2016).

between the government and Siberia; the fostering of a regional identity; the focus on education (for neo-regionalism, that education includes the study of works by Iadrintsev and Potanin); and the goal of establishing a supra-party, supra-class organization—have become the social, political, and cultural goals of the neo-regionalist movement in Siberia today.<sup>624</sup> Although the movement established by Potanin and Iadrintsev in the early 1860s faced a crisis of existence during the revolutionary year of 1917 and ultimately ceased to exist during the Russian Civil War, the ideas of regionalism still resonate with segments of the region's population, and the knowledge and appreciation of the regionalism espoused by Iadrintsev and Potanin provide one key to understanding the tense relationship between Siberians and the central government today.

Ultimately, circumstances surrounding the regionalist movement did as much to shape its destiny as the theoretical works of its members. While Iadrintsev, Potanin, Adrianov, and their fellow regionalists theorized about Siberia's status within the Russian Empire and the potential solutions for overcoming that secondary status, they also found the movement shaped by events beyond their control—the government's decision to close the university in St. Petersburg, the Omsk Separatist Affair, the untimely death of Iadrintsev, the political atmosphere of the 1905 Revolution, and ultimately the maelstrom of revolution and civil war. Even though the movement established by Iadrintsev and Potanin ended during the Russian Civil War, the language and ideas of the regionalists continue to reverberate among modern Siberians.

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<sup>624</sup> Stanislav Zakharin, "What's in store for the Siberian movement?," *Eurozine*, 11 June 2015, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2015-06-11-zakharkin-en.html> (most recently accessed on 17 June 2016).

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